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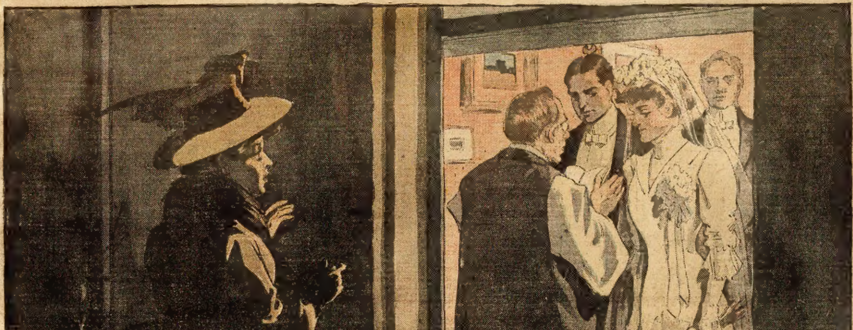

GRACE LANYON'S BETRAYAL;

Or, The Man Who Vanished.

By *WELDON J. COBB.*

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CHAPTER I.

ONE SNOWY NIGHT.

DREARILY falls the snow!

The hour is solemn dusk-tide, with a last splash of crimson-gray in the Western sky. The scene, a lonely railway station, with no other structure in immediate view. The sole human being visible on all the bleak landscape, a fair girl of eighteen. Her face was pure and beautiful as the pure and beautiful snow itself, that lay all about her, a fitting background for her spirituelle perfection, and the flakes fell like a veil of moon-gilded pearls, framing a picture of rare and radiant loveliness.

There was a keen, searching chill in the air, discomfort in the impact of the fast-descending flakes. The barren expanse seemed a shut-in world of loneliness and sterility. The girl had just been left by mistake on the snow-weighted platform of the little wayside station, in an unfamiliar place. No human cheer was in prospect, and yet, as she turned and swept the fast-darkening landscape, her eyes sparkling with love, joy and vitality, there awoke within her the most extravagant soul of hope.

A speck of light coming down the track engaged her attention. It was a lantern swinging from a light hand-car. It was driven by a grizzled old man, who, arriving at the station, proceeded to light the signal and switch lamps about the place.

He paused as he discovered the lone traveler, approached her, touched his cap, and stood respectfully admiring her beauty, and apparently somewhat puzzled at finding a stranger there at that lonely hour.

"Waiting for a train, miss?" he inquired; "one just gone and not another until after midnight."

"I have just left a train," responded the girl with a bright smile, as if her heart were singing all the time.

"Ah, from the city?"

"Yes. It seems that I made a mistake. I should have left the train at the junction for another train which would have taken me to my destination. I wished to go to Malden."

"To Malden? I see," nodded the man. "Too bad. That is nigh eight miles across country by road and fully twenty miles by rail. There will be no train for six hours, and as to walking," and he swept the snowy expanse with a wave of his hand, "that's not to be thought of."

No dismay shadowed the fair face at these words. The happy smile never changed, as he remarked:

must find my way to Malden within xt two hours—I must get to Heart's ent, some way."

Ah, Heart's Content, is it?" repeated the man, with a token of interest. "I see. Great and gay times up at the old place, they tell me. Closed for a year, and now brilliant as it used to be when dead old Richard Moore was its master. The nephew has come in for his own, they say, and grand social times are going on. A visitor, a guest, I suppose, miss?"

"Y-yes," answered the girl in rather an indefinite tone. She blushed. Then she laughed outright, and her silvery tones echoed like joy-bells ringing. It seemed as if some great gladness was consuming her. Her eyes sparkled like diamonds, her lips parted eagerly, as she added: "I am expected there."

"I don't know of a conveyance within two miles, even if anybody would risk that snow-clogged road. If it wasn't that my time is not my own, and I have two sick children waiting for me at home, I would try to get some kind of a rig, and——"

"Do not think of it, and thank you for the kind thought," said Grace Lanyon. "As to the little ones at home, give them that," and she drew two silver dollars from her purse.

"Oh, miss——"

"Tell them," interrupted the girl, "that they must get well fast, and buy some pretty playthings to think of the happiest creature in all the wide world this winter night. As to getting to Heart's Content, I shall do very well, if you will show me the way."

"How will you do very well?" inquired the man dubiously.

"I can walk it."

"Miss, never! Why——"

Again she interrupted him with a pretty imperious gesture of her shapely hand, and repeated the request for directions as to reaching Heart's Content.

"If you will come to this end of the platform," said the man, "that's it. Now you can see the lights—way over beyond the timber on the hill yonder."

"I see," nodded the girl joyously, and she spoke as if the lights she saw in the far distance were in verity the lights of home. "Oh, that is not far."

"It doesn't look far, but it is nigh eight miles," said her companion seriously. "I saw the Dares, who live at Malden, going to the county seat this noon. I don't think they have returned, and I calculate, with mishaps and the snow, they would be due soon. They must take the road right by the station here. You might wait a bit. They are good people, and would give you a lift readily.

"I think I will wait for a time, then," said the girl.

"Then I'll not lock up the station, and I'll make it as comfortable as I can for you."

He entered the little cheerless waiting-room of the station and lit a reflector lamp, shook down the old-fashioned iron stove there, piled in some coal, and drew a bench near to the fire. The girl rewarded his kindness with a smile of gratitude, but she did not sit down. All the time the radiant smile never left her lips. She seemed so permeated with a vital, eager joy, that she was restless, and after the man had gone she paced up and down the little room.

Once she paused and drew a locket from her bosom. She opened it, gazed with a charming blush upon the face portrayed within, and kissed it. The original of the portrait must have been worthy of great love, to thus awaken the fervid emotion so manifest in eye, and cheek, and lips. He was a handsome young man, with a profile clear and classic as that seen on fine Roman medals.

"Shirley—Shirley Moore!" she murmured. "Oh, it has been worth it all—the work, the waiting, the sacrifices, all, all, to see you soon, my darling! my darling!"

She kissed the portrait again and again, then she restored it to its hiding place, and taking up the small satchel at her feet went out on the platform.

An intense solitude and silence held the place in thrall. She glanced impatiently down the road along which the vehicle the railroad man had described was likely to come. Then she walked to the end of the platform, and again gazed at the far-away quivering lights that betokened her destination—Malden.

"Heart's Content—Heart's Content!" she breathed softly. "What a beautiful name! But, with all its grandeur, the real heart's content is here!" and her hand rested across her breast. "My darling, my darling! I cannot wait! He expects me, he must expect me. I told him I would come. Oh, for wings—for wings! The snow—I love it! Who's afraid? The dark? His love will light the way. Shirley, my brave, loyal sweetheart, I am coming, coming, coming to dear, beautiful Heart's Content!"

Grace Lanyon stepped down from the platform. Her foot slipped and she nearly fell. She only laughed joyously at the little disaster, like some truant schoolgirl on a snowballing frolic. Then bravely, steadfastly, she started down the road, traceable only from the elevation of its center and guiding trees and fences.

It was hard traveling. Less than half a mile accomplished, Grace Lanyon had to pause and rest, catching her breath sharply. Then she started on again, a low, quick lovesong on her lips. A huge drift blocking the way nearly submerged her. Coming to its other side, for the first time a slight dismay clouded her sunny face.

"I must keep on," she told herself bravely. "This is nothing, nothing. Hark!"

She paused with a hopeful thrill, half-turning and bending her ear in the direction of the station she had just left behind.

"Oh, if they only come this way! Yes, I hear the sleigh bells more distinctly," she exclaimed, "and I can see a lantern. It must be the people the railroad man told me about. How fortunate. Oh, I am the happiest girl in the world, and everything is happening happily for me. Stop! stop!" she cried, waving her hand as a sleigh with two horses attached approached the spot.

"Whoa! Halloa, there—what is it?" spoke a querulous voice, that of a man.

Grace could make out an old man on the front seat, a girl on the rear seat wrapped up closely in protecting furs. The snorting horses came to a halt. Grace approached the side of the sleigh. The night-light was sufficient for her to make out a very old man as the driver of the team. He stared at her strangely.

"You hailed me?" he said.

"Yes," replied Grace eagerly. "The man at the station told me that some people from Malden might be returning by this road."

"I guess it's us," responded the man. "Did you want to go to Malden?"

"Very, very much."

"Then come right in," spoke a gentle, thrilling voice from the back seat. "You are welcome, indeed."

Grace's heart warmed to the sympathetic voice, although she could not see its owner's face. The old man asked a question:

"Where do you want to go in Malden?"

"To Heart's Content," replied Grace.

She drew back with a little shock of surprise and concern, for electrically the old man half arose in his seat. His eyes blazed, his hand was uplifted, clenched.

"Heart's Content!" he grated harshly. "There is no Heart's Content. It is Heart's Wreck now! My curse upon it, from dome to foundation—upon its false master, upon every soul within it! Blight and heart-wreck, destruction, death and ruin to all who may be harbored this night in Heart's Content!"

CHAPTER II.

STRUCK DOWN.

Grace Lanyon shrank back in stupefaction. The words and bearing of the old man were positively alarming. He was shaking all over, his face bristled with the intensest rage. His denunciation so crushed the astonished Grace Lanyon that she wavered and almost fell, like a broken lily in the snow.

It was like a sudden black tempest projected across a clear, sunny sky. It was the first cloud that had darkened a single moment of this most rapturous of her girlhood's days.

"Father! father!" spoke the girl in the back seat of the sleigh, and a tiny white hand stole out from under the muffling furs and rested on the quivering arm of the old man. The effect was magical. The old man calmed down instantly. His features worked spasmodically and he muttered under his breath, but he spoke no more in the strain of his late scathing anathema. As if to conceal his real emotions, he got out of the sleigh, took the guide lamp from its hook at the side of the sleigh, and looked over the horses.

As he did this, the light flashed over the occupant of the rear seat. Grace started. Such a vision of delicate, spirituelle loveliness she had never seen. The girl before her was older than herself—small, fragile and white. There was something not of earth about her, something angelic. She seemed to be a fair, rare flower, too delicate to endure the chilling blasts of the cold, heartless world, and yet she appeared to have experienced suffering, but subdued, and crowned with patience and love.

"Come," she said sweetly to Grace, moving aside the old but heavy buffalo robes. "You must not mind father. He is ill and excited."

The rare friendliness of the girl banished the effect of her father's fierce actions. Grace got into the sleigh with a sigh of intense relief and comfort.

"You are so good," she said earnestly, and as her companion tucked the robes about her, the motherly solicitude exhibited made Grace almost forget the orphaned, friendless years of the past.

"I spoke too harshly," said the old man apologetically to Grace, climbing back into the sleigh. Then he said not another word, a dull, sullen stolidity coming over him.

The child-woman beside Grace nestled close to her. She seemed to crave and seek the contact of congeniality.

"I am glad we overtook you," she said in a winning tone. "Surely you never expected to reach Malden on foot?"

"I fear that I would not have succeeded," answered Grace, "but that was my intention, my hope," and she explained about the mishap as to trains.

"I am Eva Dare," said Grace's companion. "We have lived in Malden a great many years. My father is old and strange at times. You must forget what he said."

So overcome was Grace with the thought that she should soon arrive safely at Heart's Content, with the overpowering conviction that only peace and happiness could await her at the end of the journey, that she had already forgotten.

The swirling snow, the mellow music of the sleigh bells, the inspiring stimulus of the fresh pure air had brought the glow of rarest beauty back to her face. Her eyes shone like diamonds as she watched the nearing lights of Heart's Content.

"How beautiful you are!" spoke her companion suddenly. "And you are going to a scene of beauty. The old house is very gay with company—grand company, not humble folks, like father and me."

"And all for me! all for me!" Grace Lanyon whispered to herself, her happy heart beating time to the love thoughts of her tender soul.

There was silence for a spell. Grace's new friend seemed to have no curiosity as to the identity of her companion. Grace herself was in a rapt dream of anticipation. As they finally neared Heart's Content, the glowing lights seemed to draw her toward them like a magnet.

In the dim night light she could make out a grand landscape, sloping down from an eminence overlooking all the country around. It was crowned with an old but grand appearing mansion, all aglow with light. As the sleigh halted, Grace was so eager to reach the place that she leaped out unceremoniously.

"A thousand thanks," she said to the old man, who did not reply. He had squarely turned his back on the mansion, as though a sight of it brought to his soul a bitterness he could not endure.

"I shall see you again, dear," spoke Grace to the girl whose side she had just left.

"I hope so," answered Eva Dare, and then as Grace made a movement as if to kiss her good-by, she impulsively threw her arms about Grace's neck.

"Good-by," she said. "I hope you will find only joy and happiness wherever you go, for I know you are good because I feel that you are good. I hope, indeed, we shall meet again."

Grace thrilled at the tender words and loving caress of the beautiful creature whom she had so strangely met. The sleigh drove on, and she turned and gazed toward the brilliantly lighted mansion a few hundred yards distant.

A roadway guarded by iron gates led up to its open portals. Grace passed into the grounds. She stepped aside in among some shrubbery as a closed carriage with two spirited horses attached came up the road. Then, her eyes fascinated, she stood looking at the great mansion in a dreamy, irresolute way.

For the first moment, it seemed, she was impressed with a depressing sense of the grandeur and magnificence before her. Up to now, this fair, innocent girl, untutored in the ways of the world and of society, had thought only of the man she loved, of him, not of his environment. Perfect trustfulness had held her heart calm, confiding and happy. She had never for one minute doubted the loyal reception of a brave, tried heart. But now, like a cloud, the thought came across her mind that she was coming to Heart's Content, the dearest indeed of all its invited guests—ah! fervently she knew that—but distrustful in her womanly, shrinking nature of the ordeal of meeting Shirley Moore under the gaze of curious, stranger eyes.

She abandoned the road as she started on again, keeping in the shelter and shadow of the dense shrubbery that lined it. A sudden timidity assailed her. As she neared the rounding driveway directly near the steps leading up to the entrance of the house, she halted quite.

She had never reflected beyond her lover true, the greeting, the happy, happy welcome, and just now the exigencies of the occasion, the requirements of polite society, dawned upon her mind with depressing effect. He had sent for her, she had come, but a sudden barrier seemed interposed after she had surmounted all preliminary difficulties.

"I could never shame him," she told herself, "he loves me too truly, but others are there, and I shrink and falter, I know not why."

Grace made a detour of cleared paths. She came around to the side of the house, for the curtains were drawn in front. The sound of music had reached her ears as she had progressed thus far, but now it had ceased.

As she got beyond some high bushes she had a clear view of the interior of the house. A broad window stood not ten feet away from her. A great cry surged to her lips at her first glimpse of a man standing under a chandelier trimmed with greenery and flowers.

"Shirley!" she cried. "He is there, but—but——"

Her voice choked down in a kind of hushed awe. Grace Lanyon stood mute, transfixed, whiter than the snow about her grew her face. A wild, nameless terror filled her eyes.

There stood her Shirley, but beside him, arrayed in bridal garb, a wreath of orange blossoms upon her brow, was a woman. They faced a clergyman in full garb. From the movements of his lips, his gestures, the attitude of the bride and groom, Grace Lanyon knew that this twain had just been made man and wife.

Turning, she reeled from the spot, the mocking, awful picture seeming to flit before her. Like one distraught she wandered, she knew not where, she was crushed and stunned.

"I did not see it!" she cried, her heart torn with agony. "No, no, it was a lie, a dream! Shirley! Shirley!"

Her hands went out in wild appeal. All the bonny joy gone from her lovely face, stricken, overwhelmed, she tottered, whirled with the blinding tempest, and fell prone to the ground.

Ghostily, like a white shroud, the swirling drifts encircled her. There she lay, a crushed and broken flower.

Drearily fell the snow!

CHAPTER III.

THE STRICKEN HEART.

A low-ceilinged, poorly furnished room, drawn curtains, a small stand holding medicines, thin white hands lying across the counterpane, all surroundings strange, all reviving consciousness unreal and vague—this was what Grace Lanyon experienced.

"There was a dream," she murmured weakly, faintly. "I thought I saw Shirley"—a scream of mortal anguish completed the sentence. She knew it was no dream! In hideous reality there recurred to her the events of that vivid day of her young life, born in brightness and sunshine, gone out in the bleak blackness of the awful night of unutterable despair.

Light, quick footsteps sounded in the next room, the door opened. A fragile form crossed the apartment. It was Eva Dare.

She was more sad, paler than ever. She wore black, and this intensified the marble-like clearness of her delicate face, but the same old sweet concern and gentleness was in her love-filled eyes. She hastened to the bed.

"Poor dear!" she murmured. "She has come back to life, but has gone down the dark lane of forgetfulness again."

Eva flitted about with thoughtful, motherly solicitude. She prepared and placed a cold, wet bandage on the brow of her patient. She propped her up comfortably and forced a spoonful of some elixir between the colorless lips. Then with a little sigh of mingled patience and anxiety, she sat down by the bedside to watch her charge.

There was a long spell of silence. For a time Grace lay inanimate. Then a feeble groan escaped her lips. Her eyes opened slowly. They rested on the little figure at her side. A smile began on the wan face of the sufferer, but suddenly her eyes distended. Again that dire vision of Heart's Content overwhelmed Grace Lanyon like a shroud.

"Speak to me!" she said, her lips set closely, her finger nails clenched into the thin, woeful palms. "Where am I?"

"Do you not remember me?" spoke Eva in gentle, winning tones, her soft hand stroking soothingly the fevered brow of the sufferer. "You are at Malden. That snowy night a month ago——"

"A month ago!" gasped Grace.

"Yes, we found you in the snow, father and I, near Heart's Content. Father is dead now, poor soul! poor soul!"

It was only this statement that saved Grace from relapsing into a second swoon. She indeed remembered Eva now. Clearly, distinctly there flashed across her mind that vivid picture of the old man and this gentle creature, as she had first seen them on that stormy night, now the haunting period of her life, when all hope and joy seemed to have been blotted out by a cruel, merciless fate.

The father, then, was dead. In her comprehension of the sorrow this bereavement must mean to Eva Dare, the sympathetic heart of Grace partly forgot her own troubles. She reached a feeble hand toward her nurse, placed it silently on that of the other, and wept in pity and in love for her desolate companion.

They sat thus for some moments. Grace slowly, painfully sought to realize the situation that had eventuated in her becoming the guest, more, the patient, of a stranger. She dared not think of Shirley Moore beyond one grim fact: he was the husband of another. She dared not think of her past faith, hope and love. All that was a broken wreck now. At the portals of Heart's Content all her joy had culminated, to turn to ashes of pain and despair within one blighting moment.

She had lain there a month, Eva Dare had told her. It seemed incredible. She must have been ill, indeed, and this loyal, loving creature had cared for her! As she glanced about the room Grace noted unmistakable signs of poverty, and this brave girl had nursed her like some loving, unselfish sister, and that, too, amid a bereavement that would crush most people.

"Why did you bring me here—how could you do all you have done for me?" choked out Grace, overcome with a sense of her obligations.

"Because I love you, dear," responded Eva quietly, "because you were dying in the snow. Then, when in your delirium I learned in part that your heart was crushed, your love blighted, all hope gone from you, poor, dear soul! I clung to you closer. We are two lonely orphans. I could not but cling to you—will you not let me?"

"Oh!" cried Grace, bewildered at this strange manifestation of so much devotion, "you overwhelm me. You are a friend—oh, more than that, a dear, kind sister!"

"Let me be your sister, indeed," spoke Eva sweetly, "and now, dear, try and be very quiet while I get you some simple broth that will make you all well and strong again."

She flitted from the room, leaving the door ajar. Grace fell back among her pillows and covered her face with her hands. The crucial moment had come. She knew that now, here, she must either close her heart to the past, firmly, irretrievably, and take up her hard, cruel burden uncomplainingly, or sink never to rise again. One last glowing thought of all that Shirley Moore had been to her, and the girl, Grace Lanyon, became Grace Lanyon, the woman. Still, she would not believe all the world false. The sympathy and love of Eva was like healing balm to a dreadful wound. She strove to think only of the gentle creature who had become her good friend in the dreariest hour of her life.

Suddenly Grace strained her ears to listen to sounds that attracted her attention in the next apartment. The tones of a boyish voice mingled with the gentle ones of Eva Dare.

"He would only give two dollars for the locket, Miss Eva," were the words first audible to Grace. "The jeweler said it was good only as old gold to him."

"Thank you," responded Eva. "It is very little, but I must accept it. Here's a trifle for your trouble."

"Oh, no, Miss Eva, I couldn't take anything from you," dissented the boyish voice strenuously. "You nursed mother when she was almost dying, and she says if you have any trouble here you are to come to our home, and welcome."

"Tell your mother she is a good, kind woman," said Eva with deep feeling, "and I will not forget her generous offer. Did you see the furniture man?"

"Yes, Miss Eva."

"What did he say?"

"That he would be here early in the morning and allow you what he could for the things here."

The boy went away. Grace heard Eva sigh. Then its echo died in a soft musical murmur that was the vehicle for an old-fashioned tune that soothed Grace. The latter aroused and sat up. The overheard conversation had stirred her deeply. She realized that Eva faced poverty. Had she not just sold what was probably some cherished keepsake to keep the wolf from the door? The furniture was to follow, and in this sacrifice Grace shared, for her presence here must certainly add to the expense.

"Oh, dear! dear!" cried Eva in a pretty dismay as she re-entered the room, a bowl of steaming broth in her hand, "this will never do. My dear, you must not think of sitting up."

"But I am better—indeed, I am," assured Grace, but her voice was choked with tears, "I——"

"No, you shall not speak one word until you have drank this broth," insisted Eva. "Then you must have some medicine, and then you must sleep, sleep, sleep, oh, ever so long, and never think of a single thing until you see the beautiful sunlight again. Then I will try to manage to get you to a friend where it will be more comfortable than here."

"More comfortable!" cried Grace irrepressibly. "Oh, you could make the bleakest place a Heaven of peace and love! No, no, I must speak. I overheard what you said to the boy who was just here. You are sacrifleing everything for me. I cannot realize such devotion. Oh, my poor dear! it is worth all of life and all of death to have known the influence of such a heart of purest gold!" and Grace broke down utterly, and every tear she shed relieved her over-burdened soul.

"And now you will be reasonable," said Eva brightly, when the paroxysm of emotion was over, and Grace, exhausted and subdued, had partaken of both broth and medicine. "I see I am detected, so I must confess. Yes, we are in desperate straits, but what of that? The cruse of oil has not yet failed, and we are not begging for bread. Why, in a week there will be two strong, ambitious girls starting out to buffet the world, and by work, hard work, blessed work, earning heaps and heaps of money."

"But I cannot allow you to sell your last possessions for my sake," demurred Grace. "If you will bring me my little satchel, I will give you sufficient to tide over the present, and as soon as I can write to the city we shall have abundance."

"Your satchel?" repeated Eva thoughtfully. "I never thought of that. I remember now that you had one when we first met you. We never thought of looking for it when we found you in the snow. We were only anxious to get you to shelter and care, for the cruel cold had nearly checked your heart beats. I am afraid it is useless inquiring for it now. All kinds of changes have taken place at Heart's Content since that night—hundreds of people have been over the ground where you lay."

"I could telegraph to the city for money," suggested Grace, but Eva interrupted her.

"I positively will not allow you to do a thing or think of a thing until you are entirely well. I have arranged to leave here in the morning—in fact, I am obliged to leave here," continued Eva, growing a trifle serious, "but you will be removed to more pleasant quarters without any discomfort."

Under the influence of the food and the medicine, Grace Lanyon experienced a sense of returning strength. She was silent for a spell. It was a slow awakening from the land of dreams into the realities of life. She planned in her mind regarding a little store of money she had in the city, and how later she would recompense her loyal companion and nurse. Then she fell to thinking gravely of the great change that must come in her life. There were details, too, to face of that "one snowy night." She summoned all her courage and spoke again.

"I wish you would tell me—tell me," and she choked down a sob, "all that you know of Heart's Content. Most of all—most of all," and her voice quite broke, "about Shirley Moore."

"There is not much to tell," answered Eva seriously. "My father and I have lived in this little cottage at the edge of the Moore estate for many years. My father was an artist, but when my mother died, his old friend, General Richard Moore, the uncle of Shirley Moore, placed us comfortably in this cottage. He thought a great deal of my father, and he declared that he would care for him as long as he lived. Then when the General fell ill he sent for his estranged nephew, Shirley Moore, who was in the far West. Before the nephew reached Heart's Content, General Moore was dead, leaving a will by which Shirley inherited all his large fortune."

"I knew of that," murmured Grace in a subdued tone, shading her eyes with her hands.

"I had known Shirley Moore in my childhood. In fact, we were playmates together, but it was nearly six years since he left home and became a wanderer. In some way his proud spirit could not brook some affront of the General, who had spells of unreasonable anger. The General had another nephew named Elmer Vance. I never saw him, but he had gone to live in a foreign land. It was the gossip for a long time that he was to be the General's heir. After Shirley came home, however, and the will was opened, it was said that Elmer Vance had been dead for two years, and that the will of the General left all his fortune to Shirley."

Grace sighed deeply. All this in part she had known, but she did not now tell Eva so.

"Shirley was greatly changed," continued Eva.

"How changed?" inquired Grace.

"Why, where he had been light-hearted, happy, the friend of everybody when a boy, he had become a surly, dark-tempered man. It was the old Shirley in looks, but a new Shirley in actions. He was cold and repellant to former friends. He evaded people. He placed his affairs in the hands of a cruel, selfish lawyer in a neighboring town. The attorney refused to consider my father's arrangement with the old General, and ordered us out of the house. That was what killed father. One day a dark, siren-like girl drove to Heart's Content. A stout, bold-acting woman was her companion. Soon it was noised about that Shirley Moore was about to take a bride and then a trip abroad. None of his old friends was invited to the wedding—only high up county people. The wedding took place. It seems that according to the terms of the will Heart's Content could not be disposed of for a year. Shirley Moore ordered the place closed up, and we have not heard of him nor his bride, or his plans, of his whereabouts since that time."

It was a white, quivering face that Grace Lanyon turned to her companion.

"The name of the bride," she said wearily, "was it Nora Duvall?"

"Yes, that was the name," assented Eva.

"I cannot understand it," murmured Grace, putting her hand to her aching heart. "It was Shirley—it was Nora Duvall. How could it all have come about? Oh, Eva! Eva! I must tell my story to ease my breaking heart, my strange, unreal story of misery and mystery!"

CHAPTER IV.

A DEAD PAST.

Eva Dare gently took the hand of her companion in her own and caressed it softly.

"Be brave, my dear," she said consolingly. "It is a dead and buried past now, but perhaps I had better know of it, because so much the clearer may we understand one another, side by side in the brighter future which I know will come to us."

It was the supreme moment in the life of Grace Lanyon. It was a hard, bitter struggle to face the past, to go over the torturing memories the she would be glad to have buried out of sight forever. In a low, uncertain tone she began to tell the story of one swift, sweet dream of love, ending in the hollowness of treachery and despair.

Grace was an orphan. She could not remember her childhood. She recalled the early years of her girlhood passed in an isolated house in a quiet village, her sole companion a grave, strangely silent, old woman, who seemed to be no relative, but who had cared for her for over ten years. Her sole education she received from this woman, who died one day, and after she was buried there was barely enough to pay the expenses.

With no knowledge of her parentage and a few dollars in money and some confusing, time-worn papers, that seemed valueless to her, Grace went to the city.

"I realized that I was friendless and alone in the world," she now told Eva. "I was very fortunate in securing clean, healthy work, well paid for, too. It was in the service of a large wholesale house manufacturing fine artificial flowers for millinery purpose."

"I would like that," said Eva with glowing eyes. "I love to work, and the dainty and artistic appeal to me greatly."

"I, too, loved the work," went on Grace. "My employers were considerate people. I learned rapidly, and was very happy, as they advanced my salary, to be able to lay aside quite a sum in savings each week. For over a year my life went on uneventful. My work companions were all kind and pleasant to me. One day——"

Grace paused and her voice broke. It was some moments before she could go on with her story. Then it was to disclose the first and only love episode in her young life.

It was a Saturday half-holiday, and she was at a public park. Her handkerchief, in one corner of which was tied her weekly salary, blew from her hand into the lake. A young man, a stranger, discovered her dismayed dilemma. He secured a boat and brought back to Grace her handkerchief, with its contents intact.

"That was the first time I saw Shirley Moore," said Grace, and, again overcome by her emotions, there was another pause in her narrative.

But her soul came into her eyes as she recalled those eventful days and one blissful week succeeding it. The stranger was soon no longer a stranger to her. Naturally his little act of kindness paved the way to a mutual introduction. He, too, was an orphan, like Grace. That fair afternoon they passed together in the park like two happy children, viewing the sights, and when they parted they knew each the history of the other, and the dawning of love had come over both of them.

After that through one happy week Grace saw Shirley Moore several times. He was going to the far West to engage in some engineering work on a large irrigation project. He asked permission to write to her, which was granted. No word of love was spoken between them, but when he bade her good-by there was a light in his honest eyes that thrilled Grace to the soul, and her heart beat fast as he spoke of winning a fortune and coming back to her when that consummation had been attained.

After Shirley went away she received and answered many letters. He sent her his photograph. His letters grew more and more friendly. Then he told of complications in his work, of enemies who were striving to wrest from him the fruits of his labor. One day there came a letter saying to her that he felt the need of love and sympathy in his lonesome life. Shirley Moore told of his devoted love. Grace answered him gladly. They became engaged.

"Those were happy, happy days," sighed Grace. "My whole life was wrapped up in those letters. Shirley was very near to success in securing some valuable concessions from the Government. Business rivals were plotting to undermine him, but he felt that he was very near to success. It was about this time that a new person came into my life. It is her influence I fear, that has wrecked my life."

"A woman?" murmured Eva.

"Yes, her name was Nora Duvall. She was a forewoman at the millinery workroom, a dark, flashing, brilliant beauty, who for a time pretended to take great interest in me. I could not make a confident of her, but somehow one day when she was in my room I am satisfied she looked over all the letters I had received from Shirley. She, too, discovered his picture. In her impulsive, excitable way she raved over it. She said she had never seen a more handsome man, she had fallen in love with him instantly and all that. From that time on, whenever we met, she always asked me about Shirley, saying she would cross the world for a mere smile from such a man. I was not at all jealous, for she was always talking of this and that actor, or musician, or society man she had fallen in love with, and the girls treated her as an impetuous, irrepressible girl who did not know her own mind."

"And that was the same Nora Duvall who is now the wife of Shirley Moore?" inquired Eva.

"Yes," murmured Grace in a low, pained tone. "One day she disappeared mysteriously, and I never saw her again until I saw her the bride of Shirley Moore, that snowy night when first I met you. I found the photograph of Shirley and some letters of his missing. Of course, Nora took them. I could not then fathom her motives, judging her to be a foolish, lovesick girl."

"She was plotting against your happiness all the time," said Eva.

"About that same time," continued Grace, "I was greatly distressed at failing to receive any letters from Shirley. Three long, anxious weeks passed by, and not a word from him. I wrote several times, to receive no reply. One day there came a letter in a strange handwriting. It was from the woman who had been his landlady in the West. She stated she had found one of my letters in Shirley's room, and wrote to me as the only friend she knew him to have. She said that Shirley had been ill, delirious with a fever for nearly a month, and advised me to apprise his relatives at once of his condition. She added that his continued illness was endangering important business interests that should be attended to, or his competitors would take advantage of his condition and wrest from him the result of years of labor. The letter went on to say that Shirley seemed to have no money, and that her ow nresources were limited. I was greatly troubled over this letter. I did not know then of the residence of his uncle here at Malden. I had no means of advising his relatives of his condition. I hastened to reply to the letter, sending the landlady all of my saving of a year. They amounted to nearly $200. Then came a weary, torturing wait for two weeks, and then a letter from Shirley. I shall never forget that letter. It told of his recovery, and then it went on to speak of his feelings toward me for what he termed an unselfish devotion to him that would link my life to his in imperishable love. His enemies had indeed robbed him. They had plotted well. All the work of years had gone for nothing. They now had control of the proposition he had been promoting, and he had come back to health a pauper. However, had it not been for the money I had sent he might have died for want of the expert medical care which saved his life. A part of the money, too, had enabled him to employ a lawyer to fight off a false charge of fraud, brought by his business rivals, and which, going adversely, might have unjustly doomed him to a long term of imprisonment."

The eyes of the listening Eva glowed with sympathy for her unselfish charge who had given her all freely to the man she loved.

"The letter ended in a wonderful way," added Grace. "Great news had come to Shirley. He had received word that his uncle desired him to return home at once, that he had made him his heir, that hereafter the nephew need worry no more to acquire a fortune, for he would become a very rich man. Shirley wrote that the first thing he would tell his uncle was that the dearest, bravest girl in the world had saved his life, and that we would be married at once. He wrote me to feel no womanly shrinking from this imperious resolve to have me come at once to Malden, to become the mistress of Heart's Content. Love, only love, must guide me. A devoted husband, a fond old uncle who could not help but appreciate my devotion to his only living relative, would welcome me. I—I—came. You know the rest."

Poor Grace broke down there. There were tears of sympathy and sisterly love in Eva's eyes. It was easy to fill out the broken chapter. In some way apparently Nora Duvall had taken advantage of her knowledge of the affairs of Grace and Shirley. In some way she had sought out and found the heir to Heart's Content. With siren wiles she had stolen his heart from Grace. It was a sad, sad tragedy, with a girl's innocent, confiding heart shattered at the very threshold of her happiness.

"Dear," said Eva gently, after a long spell of silence, "let us forget it all, the cruel, heartless past, from this moment. We have one another. I can never cease to love you as a sister. Let us go to the city, and take up our hard burden hopefully, working cheerfully, bravely for our daily bread."

But they did not know the real truth about Heart's Content, nor have any premonitions of the tragic and strange future that lay before them.

The continuation of this thrilling story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

A DEAL IN DIAMONDS.

Count Sacha Roubletsky was hard up. To the world he was still a dashing young Russian nobleman, son of an immensely wealthy prince, but in point of fact he was financially at his last gasp.

Monte Carlo, the gayeties of Paris, and now a succession of disastrous evenings at a London gambling house, where high play was winked at, had cleaned him out.

Further, the most serious part of all, his father, tired of his continual extravagances, had put his son down, and given him the choice between returning to Russia and rusticating on the family estates, or shifting for himself.

Count Sacha had no intention to return to Russia. On the other hand, he must have money.

Apart from his personal extravagance, he had designs on an American heiress, temporarily resident in London, whom he had met on the Riviera, and it was necessary that he should be able to support his character of a rich young man.

Count Sacha was a rather wild young fellow, but he was a courteous rogue. He wanted money badly, and was not very particular as to how he got it, so long as the means did not bring him within reach of the law's arm.

He wanted a thousand or so for nothing. That was the problem he debated as he sat in his boarding house, smoking cigarette after cigarette. At last he rose, with a satisfied smile on his face.

* * * * * * * * *

Next morning Count Sacha Roubletsky called on Messrs. Sparkle & Shine, the well-known jewelers. He explained who he was, and that he had come to select some jewelry for his sweetheart.

He added that the lady was a collector of gems, and that he proposed to present her with a fine unmounted diamond, and desired to be shown some specimens.

From the glittering tray he selected a beautiful stone, price five hundred pounds. He then explained that, owing to certain expected remittances being delayed, he was not in a position to complete the purchase at the moment, and, in any case, he wished first to submit the stone to his sweetheart's approval.

He added suavely that, of course, as he was unknown to Messrs. Sparkle & Shine, he could not expect them to part with the gem without making inquiries, but they were quite at liberty to apply to the Russian Embassy for any information they desired concerning him. He proposed to return the following day, and, everything being satisfactory, to take away the diamond.

To this course the jewelers agreed, and, inquiring at the Russian Embassy, were informed that Count Sacha was unquestionably what he himself claimed to be—the son of a wealthy prince, and that Messrs. Sparkle & Shine would probably be safe in giving him credit for even more than the amount mentioned.

They did not know at the Embassy that Sacha had practically been disowned by his father—and they were agreeable to the count's own suggestion, that a member of the Embassy should attend at the jeweler's next day, formally to identify him. This was done, and Count Sacha received the diamond.

The same day he called at a well-known pawnbroker's, and, mentioning airily that he was in temporary difficulties, pledged the diamond for the small sum of fifty pounds.

The next day found Count Sacha once more at Messrs. Sparkle & Shine's. His sweetheart, he said, was enchanted with the diamond, but—oh, the extravagance of these women—nothing would satisfy her now, but that she should have another diamond, absolutely matching the first.

The jewelers explained that to match such a stone would be a matter of great difficulty, and the price of the second gem would be enormously increased; in short, for such a pair of twin diamonds they would have to charge three thousand pounds, a fancy price, but it was a fancy order.

Count Sacha shrugged his shoulders—the price was stiff, but he could deny his sweetheart nothing—would Messrs. Sparkle & Shine, please, at once set about procuring the second diamond, which, he insisted, must be an absolute match in weight, color, shape, cutting, and every particular.

The jewelers, being unable to match the diamond themselves, wrote to the leading dealers and pawnbrokers, describing the stone they wanted, and intimating that they were prepared to go as far as two thousand pounds for a perfect specimen. Among those whom they wrote to was the pawnbroker with whom Count Sacha had pledged the original diamond, which was just what that ingenious rascal had intended should happen.

A few days later Count Sacha called at the pawnbroker's, and said he had come to redeem his diamond. Summoned by an assistant, the proprietor himself appeared.

He had had Messrs. Sparkle & Shine's letter, and, remembering the beautiful diamond pledged with him a day or two before, he had examined it, and, naturally, found that it met all of Sparkle & Shine's requirements.

The count redeemed the stone, and then the pawnbroker inquired whether by any chance he would care to sell it.

"Oh, no, it was a family heirloom; his customer would not dream of parting with it.

That was a pity, said the pawnbroker; he had chanced to show the diamond to his wife, and she had taken a violent fancy to it, so much so that, to gratify her, he was prepared to give a fancy price—he offered eight hundred pounds.

Count Sacha laughed, and shook his head. One thousand pounds? Oh, no.; he really did not want to sell it, and he must be going. An offer of one thousand three hundred pounds, however, made him hesitate. At last, after prolonged bargaining, Count Sacha passed back the diamond to the pawnbroker, and received one thousand five hundred pounds in exchange.

Once outside, he jumped into a cab, and drove as fast as he could to Messrs. Sparkle & Shine's.

Arrived there, he explained, with many regrets, that his sweetheart had changed her mind, she no longer wanted the second diamond. Had the jewelers yet found it? No? Ah, that was well! Still he feared he had put them to much trouble. He was full of regrets. However, he was glad to say his remittance had arrived, and he had now much pleasure in handing over five hundred pounds in payment for the original diamond which his sweetheart had decided to keep.

One thousand pounds to the good, Count Sacha left the shop, having engineered a most ingenious swindle. Yet can any one say where he came within reach of the law?

A "Leetle Diff'rence."

"Yes, sir, gentlemen; thar's a leetle diff'rence between farmin' out West an' back here in old Varmount," said Uncle Si Eggmann to the cronies around the stove at the cross-roads store, on his return from a visit to his brother in Dakota. "Now, out thar in the West they don't really think they got a farm unless it totals about 3000 or 4000 acres; an' if they air raisin' stock they speak o' 5000 head as bein' a 'leetle bunch o' cattle.' An' takes 'em 'bout half a day to hoe one row o' corn, the rows air so long, an' they harvest corn an' wheat enough on one farm to fill our town hall. Now, that's a leetle diff'rent from what it is here in New England, where we call twenty acres o' ground, a couple o' dozen hens an' a rooster, six or eight keows, an' a a rozberry patch a farm! Yes, sir, gentlemen, thar's a turrible diff'rence between farmin' East an' farmin' West—a most turrible diff'rence!"
—Puck.

How's This for Mud.

Of all the yarns that ever came down the line, regarding deep mud, the following should be entitled to the blue ribbon. It happened in the place where mud originated.

A man was walking along the roadside one summer day and noticed a fairly good looking hat out in the road. Reaching out with his cane, he gave it a cut and was startled to hear a voice exclaim: "Here, what the deuce are you doing?"

Then he made the astonishing discovery that the owner of the head-piece was under the hat, up to his ears in mud.

"Great Heavens!" exclaimed the man who had hit the hat. "Is that mud as deep as that?"

"Deep!" cried the victim. "Why, man alive, I'm standing on a load of hay!"

The Black Phantom;

OR, MARK ASHTON'S REVENGE.

By Ella Martin.

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CHAPTER V.

HAL'S RETURN.

WHEN Hal, the Scout, stepped into the clearing where the emigrants were huddled together, his smoking rifle in his hand, the most of them thought the attack had begun, and each man grasped his gun more firmly, and awaited orders from their guide. But Hazel King knew better, and felt sure that the solitary spy had come to grief. And believing that Hal had done the work well, she backed out from under the wagon, and went forward with the loaded revolver in her hand.

The scout turned and gazed at her admiringly, for Delia had told him the story of her bravery. Hazel divined this, for Delia had but just left his side, and a blush arose to her cheeks. He smiled gently down upon the girl, who, though tall, was obliged to look up to meet his gaze. And for a moment they stood and gazed into each other's eyes.

Hal Wilson was past forty, not yet gray, and his life in the open air had kept him strong, and healthy, with a fresh-looking complexion. He wore a moustache that matched in hue his wavy brown hair. He had clean-cut features, and gray eyes that could be mild or piercing.

"You will have no need of the weapon now," he said, "unless you use it on yonder red devil," and he pointed to the Indian Will Allen had taken prisoner.

"Oh, that would be entirely different," stammered Hazel. "He is helpless now, and quite at our mercy."

"Humph!" grunted the scout, "he deserves no mercy."

Hazel did not reply, for at that moment Mrs. Hill plucked at his sleeve, and Mrs. Sheldon also stood waiting to hear the result of his search for the truants.

"Yes, I have discovered them," he made answer, "but I could not bring them. We must leave their rescue in the hands of one more capable than I."

"Oh!" moaned the women—these mothers, who had waited so long for news of their loved ones, one in silent suspense, and the other in subdued, but hysterical weeping—"then they are in the hands of the savages? And there is no one here more capable than you. They are lost! oh, they are lost!"

"Do not despair, dear Mrs. Hill. I have a plan that will save Bessie and Robert. There is another who is more capable than I, and in a better position to serve them. You may look upon them as rescued already; there is no chance of failure. As for Ben——"

But here the scout felt the clutch of a hand upon his arm, and then a dead weight dragging him down. He stooped and lifted up the fainting woman.

"Hear me out, madam, you give way too quickly. I was about to say that I believe Ben safe from capture; and that he will return of his own accord before long.

"Here, Miss King, will you see what you can do toward restoring this dear woman to her usual brave spirit?"

"Do not mind me, I am all right now," gasped Mrs. Sheldon.

The scout had turned, and was seating Mrs. Hill on a dry goods box close by.

"As for this dear little coward, we do not expect anything better of her. She will even faint with joy when she sees Bessie returning."

"Oh, if I only could see her returning—with Robert and Ben," she added, as her eyes fell upon the stricken mother of twelve-year-old Ben, and suddenly realizing she must not think of Bessie alone.

Hazel King had obeyed the injunction given by Mrs. Sheldon not to mind her. For at that moment her eyes were attracted by the efforts of the savage they had left bound within their midst. The attention of the others being drawn to the scout, he had twisted and tugged at his thongs till his hands were free, and at the moment Hazel had discovered him he was stooping down to undo the bonds about his feet.

There was no time to lose, as the girl realized; to hesitate or wait to call the scout's attention to the nearly freed Indian meant his escape. And quick as a flash she raised her pistol and fired. But as the bullet had only been aimed with the intention of wounding him, and thereby preventing his escape, it did not stop the flight of the Indian. He received the ball in his right arm just as the fetters fell from his feet, and with a wild whoop that awoke the echoes on every side, he darted under the nearest wagon, and bounded away in the darkness.

"Stop him!" shouted Hal, "he must not escape, he knows too much!"

Instantly the rifles of the sentinels were leveled at the fleeing savage, and several shots were fired before the echo of the war-whoop had died lingeringly away in the forest. But none of these took effect, owing to the darkness, as his shout of defiance attested.

Hal turned to Hazel:

"You are a brave girl, but too tender-hearted. Next time shoot to kill."

He turned away abruptly.

"And now, my men, bundle the women into the wagons, and mount the driver's seat. We can't pull out of here any too soon for safety. The horses are all hitched, I see. And my saddle horse is ready."

"But Bessie!" gasped Mrs. Hill, even while she was obeying his commands by climbing into the covered wagon. The rest of the women were also eager to obey, for though loath to leave the vicinity before the missing ones returned, they had confidence in their guide, and believed it best to be prompt in their obedience. And had he not said he had a plan whereby he might restore the absent ones?

"I will ride beside you till I have given you directions to follow," he said, as he accompanied the leading wagon which was being driven by Will Allen and Mr. Sheldon.

"There's an arm of the mountain which extends out into the plain at the right, as you can see. You must round that point, and then bear to the left, keeping in the shelter of the forest near the mountain side, and when daylight comes camp as I have taught you, and be ready to fight for your lives at a moment's notice. And don't forget to post sentinels, day and night. The red demons are cunning where deviltry is concerned.

"You will find water easily enough, and you will be obliged to move on each day to obtain fresh grass for the horses."

"But if Ben should return and find the camp deserted——" began Mr. Sheldon. "He would be helpless."

"That is exactly what will happen, most likely, and for that reason I shall stay behind."

"If you should miss him? The poor boy would think we had deserted him."

"Ben is a sensible fellow, and he knows his parents would not leave him alone in the wilderness without providing a way to restore him to their arms. Besides, he knows and has confidence in Hal Wilson. Just leave it to me, Mr. Sheldon."

"If something should happen to you—what then?" inquired Mr. Hill, as Hal fell back and drew up beside the team he was driving.

"Then all depends on the Black Phantom, no one else can save you. In case I do not show up in a reasonable length of time, trust all to him. But do not try to get to the frontier alone, or at least till the danger from the redskins is past, and your own is restored to you."

"They will track us when daylight comes."

"They will be able to find and follow your trail, most certainly, if not prevented; therefore be ready to fight in case our plan to prevent it should fail."

"And your plan?"

"There is no time to lay it before you. In fact, I am not entirely acquainted with it myself. But the Black Phantom has agreed to befriend and aid us. And he is able."

"What is the mystery of this Black Phantom, Mr. Wilson?"

"Ah, that I cannot tell you, for I have not learned it myself. But I know the influence of his presence on the Indians, and that he is able and willing to serve any one in need of protection from them.

"And now I must return to our late camping grounds and hang around till Ben returns. If he does not show up, there is work for me to do. In three days, if all goes well, you will see me, or receive a message. At the end of a week, if you have no news of me, know that all is lost, and try to continue the journey alone."

With these brief instructions he wheeled and rode away in the night.

It was with heavy hearts that the little cavalcade took its way on over the plains without their guide, and leaving several of their number behind, not knowing what their fate was to be. But they had been assured by Hal, the Scout, in whom they had every confidence, that they could best serve the interest of the captives by breaking camp and following the directions he gave them. He was versed in Indian ways and the means to outwit them. Therefore they trusted all to him, and obeyed his instructions. There was hitched behind the rear wagon two saddle ponies, for use, whenever they were needed to reconnoiter the country. In this wagon was Hazel King, who was going West with her uncle and family. Without being observed Hazel managed to lift the flap of the cover at the back of the wagon, and drop to the ground. And untying the halter of one of the ponies, which was already bridled, she sprang lightly to the saddle. She had some trouble in turning the pony back, for his inclinations were to accompany the retreating wagons. But she finally managed it, and then she began to fear discovery, for the remaining pony began to whinny on missing his mate. Besides, the whinnying of the pony, if continued, might be dangerous.

She halted a moment and listened; the sound was not repeated, and speaking to her horse, she dashed away in the direction of the deserted camp.

Hal had preceded her, and was lingering near under cover of the bushes, for he thought if Ben returned, it must be soon, now. He had reasons to know he had not been taken captive with Robert and Bessie, for he had been secreted near the wigwams when the prisoners were disposed of. He guessed rightly that Ben had followed them, and would return to the camp and report upon what he had learned.

As for himself, he had fallen in with the Black Phantom on his return; and though phantoms are not supposed to converse, and this one was never known to, it fell out that he yielded to the scout's importunities, and promised to aid the movers. It was then the plans were laid to save the wagon train, and rescue the captives. How these plans were to pan out will appear later.

"It is time Ben was here," muttered the scout, growing impatient; and turning his head he listened attentively. He had heard something—something louder than footsteps, such as Ben's would be while creeping cautiously through the forest. It was the beat of hoofs. Could it be—was it possible that trouble had overtaken the little caravan he had so recently started on its way, and one of the men had ridden back to tell him?

No, it was Hazel. Something serious must have happened to cause them to send a woman back over that dangerous road to summon him. Could none of the men be spared? And how was he to leave before Ben's return?

Hazel King had ridden into the clearing by this time, and he could see her plainly, for the stars were shining brightly now, though the moon had not yet risen. Her cheeks were flushed, and her dark eyes shone like twin stars with the excitement of her escapade. Her hair, glossy and abundant, had become loosened from its fastenings by her ride, and was streaming down over her shoulders. How an Indian would covet those rich, raven tresses, the scout thought.

She was superbly handsome, her form Juno-like, and her mien utterly fearless. The scout rode out of the shadows to meet her and drew rein beside her.

"Hazel!"

It was the first time he had called her anything but Miss King since they left the settlement together. But now his surprise made him forget formality.

Until her name sounded in that tenderly-spoken way on her ears, she had not quite understood why she had returned to this place.

And until he had involuntarily spoken the name so eagerly, so tenderly Hal had never fully realized the fact that he was past forty. It came to him in a vague sort of way now while he was wondering at his own temerity in addressing her by her given name.

They were drawn up side by side, their ponies headed in different directions, and they were looking deep into each other's eyes. While around them was danger both to themselves and to others. The shadows on every side might hold skulking savages, but they reckoned not of it at that moment. They were beginning to understand their own hearts, and they found the growing knowledge so strange and sweet that all else was forgotten.

"Why did you return?" he asked at last, to droop with conscious blushes that his eager gaze had brought to her smooth as he saw the pleading, pathetic face begin cheeks.

"Ben!" she said, breathlessly. And she had told herself when she made the venture that she would not desert the boy because the rest had done so. She was armed, and she was not afraid to return and look for him.

"Was it Ben?" he spoke more to himself than to her. For he was looking beyond her, and there was a vacant look in his eyes.

Hazel shot an angry glance in his direction. She was sure at that moment that if she should live to be a hundred she would never forgive him the insinuation his words conveyed. It was too near the truth. She had believed it was for Ben's sake she was returning; she would wait for him and take him behind on her horse, while the scout went on to the Indian village to try to save Bessie and Robert. And she had looked for Hal's approval. For what would poor Ben do trying to find his way on foot to the next camp of the emigrants. Now it would be different; mounted, they could overtake the wagons.

Certainly, she had expected to meet Hal and be aided by him in her search for the boy. And she had hoped her absence would not be noticed till she could restore the venturesome lad to his parents. But she had not owned even to herself, that to meet the scout, and to receive words of approbation had at all influenced her action, until he had murmured those words: "Was it Ben?" And her quickening pulse and beating heart had proved her guilty of what his words implied.

But Hal was far from thinking the thoughts her guilty conscience imputed to his words. He was amazed at her daring, and wondering whether she was so solicitous of Ben's welfare, or whether she was desirous of adventure, which the boy's cause gave her an opportunity to seek.

He brought his eyes back to her face suddenly, while she was still undecided whether to gallop away and leave him, or continue her search for Ben without his assistance. His next words decided her.

"Miss King, you are a daring woman in more ways than one."

She flashed him a glance from her dark eyes that ought to have slain him on the spot. The color crept over her face in a crimson tide. He thought her bold and forward for coming back to him like this, did he? Well, he should never again have cause to think she had sought his company, she determined.

After that one fiery glance she wheeled her horse and dashed away in the gloom of the night. Ben was forgotten.

Poor Ben! It was at that very moment he rose to his feet to find himself confronted by an Indian, the same, though Ben did not know it, who had escaped from the camp of the whites, possessed of their secret plans, and carrying a bullet from Hazel King's pistol in his right arm.

CHAPTER VI.

BEN'S EXPERIENCE.

When Ben rose to his feet and found himself confronted by an Indian warrior he was for a moment frozen with horror. His heart seemed to stop beating. It was so unexpected that he was not prepared for an encounter, though he was armed. One false move and he was lost. He waited for the Indian to speak.

"What wants my white brother near the village of the red men?"

Ben spoke up bravely.

"Paleface brother wants white squaw!"

The savage grunted and motioned Ben to precede him.

This the boy had no intention of doing. His mind had been working rapidly. The forest would hide him if once he could put a few rods between himself and the redskin. He turned as if about to obey, but instead dodged to one side and took to his legs, diving into the densest thickets until he was out of sight of his pursuer. For the savage had given chase. Once he was almost overtaken, and was in full view of his enemy. A tomahawk whizzed by his head and buried itself in a tree beyond.

Ben could not know it, but he owed his life in that instance to Hazel King. The bullet she had sent into the Indian's arm had been the means of making his aim less accurate. Had he not been wounded the blade would surely have cleft the boy's skull in twain. Ben knew the tomahawk had stuck in the tree, and like lightning he darted forward, wrenched the instrument from the bark, whirled, and sent it flying at the head of his pursuer. It struck the Indian full in the face, he leaped high in the air and fell forward. But as he did so he gave such a piercing yell that it woke the echoes of the mountains for miles around.

An answering cry arose from scores of throats around the campfires. And in less time than it takes to tell it the males of the village were on the spot.

The Indian who had left the emigrant camp with a partial knowledge of their plans for defense could never impart the information, for he was dead—slain by the hand of the self-constituted boy-scout, Ben Sheldon.

Ben was something of a sprinter, and prided himself on his ability to out-distance the other boys of his acquaintance. It stood him in good stead in the present instance; for, although they had caught sight of him, he was far in advance of them when they reached the spot where the dead Indian lay, and the shower of arrows they sent after him fell far short, and were lost among the bushes that most of the time hid him from their sight.

He did not head toward the camp of his people, he would not lead the howling mob to his friends. They were likely to be attacked before morning anyway, and he had meant to return and prepare them for the fight.

So he ran for dear life toward the mountain, hoping he would find some shelter there, or at least denser darkness. And behold, as he ran he discovered an opening in the mountain side, into which he almost tumbled. He had dashed through a thicket and into a hole behind it before he knew there was an opening there. He heard the savages close behind him, and feared he had fallen into a trap; but he had no time to retreat and change his course.

If it was only a small cavern with no nooks in which to hide, and they should blunder into it as he had done, then he would soon be helpless in their hands. However that might be he could go no further. He had been out-winded by the savages and sank to the ground just inside the opening utterly exhausted. He heard the yells of triumph, or so they seemed to him, close by, and he lost all hope.

But now a miracle was taking place. He did not understand it, and he could scarcely believe his senses. It was growing darker in the cave, the stars he had been able to see from where he had fallen were disappearing, the hole was slowly closing up. Without hands, so far as Ben could see, a great boulder was rolling into place that just fitted the aperture.

It was quite dark inside now, and though he stared hard at the closed opening he could not understand the secret of it. The baffled yells of the savages came to him through the thick stone, muffled and indistinct.

He was saved!

He did not realize by what agency this safety had come, but the certainty of it almost overpowered him, and for a time he was nearly unconscious. He closed his eyes and lay there panting, the relief was so great, and his exhaustion so complete. The sound of the disappointed and baffled redskins, as they searched the mountain side, seemed to congeal the blood in his veins. He felt safe from them for the time being, but he knew not by what ingenuity they might contrive to gain an entrance to his retreat.

But his worst fears now were for his friends in camp, for Ben, of course, knew nothing of their late move. Baffled in their efforts to capture him, Ben believed the Indians would turn their attention to the intended massacre, and perhaps make the attack before the scout had returned to tell them there were Indians in the woods. Besides, there were Bessie and Robert. Who was to inform their friends of their situation, if he could not escape from this place and reach his friends in safety?

He heard no more of the Indians, and decided that they had given up the chase, unless they knew of some other entrance to cavern. He struggled to his feet determined to look about him for a hiding place in case he should need one. Groping about in the darkness he found that the rocky bottom slanted upwards; and farther on, rude steps led to a cavern above.

He drew a match from his pocket and struck it against the rock. Before it had burned itself out he had taken in a view of his surroundings. At the left of the place where he had entered, was a large opening, but his eyes could not penetrate the darkness of the cavern beyond. Ahead was the slanting rock with footholds hewn rudely into it as the rock became more steep. He turned and went back to the place of entrance. He examined the boulder which closed it, and found it was worked by machinery, the mechanism of which he could not understand. If he had a steady light, he thought, possibly he might discover a way to move it, and thus liberate himself. But in the darkness he could do nothing. Perhaps it would be foolhardiness to attempt to escape from the prison-house Providence had provided him with. The Indians might have placed a guard outside to wait for his reappearance. So he concluded to leave his friends in the hands of the scout, whom he doubted not would be able to manage the whole affair; and turning his attention to his own danger he went on with his investigations.

How came the stone fixed ready to roll into place at a moment's notice? And who had closed the opening after he had entered? were some of the questions that puzzled him. But while examining it more closely he trod on an iron plate directly in front of it, and the boulder began to move slowly from its place. This was not exactly what Ben desired at this particular moment, and he sprang suddenly backward, relieving the plate of the pressure, and the stone immediately rolled back into place again. But now he thought he had discovered the secret of the automatic door, or at least that part that operated from the inside. How an entrance could be gained from without when the opening was closed was another matter. Certainly in some other way, or the savages would have reached him; for he had heard them hurling themselves against the rock with the ferocity of tigers.

He began to feel more secure now, so far as they were concerned. For a place so well secured at its front entrance would surely have no place left unguarded. But in what sort of place was he? Was it a den of robbers, in which he had taken refuge? Who but robbers would have found it necessary to contrive a way to close their retreat automatically? And yet what use would men of their calling have for a rendezvous so far removed from the bounds of civilization? Perhaps it had only been their retreat in times of extreme danger, and the cave was now deserted. No matter, he was safe for the present, and he would proceed with his investigations.

On and on he toiled, upward, and still upward, striking a match occasionally to see what change had taken place in his surroundings. He had not gone far before he perceived a hole in the wall at his left. If he used all his powers of effort at climbing he believed he could draw himself up. This side chamber might provide a safe hiding place from the occupants of the cave ahead, if there were any, who must, he thought, be white men and bandits.

Without further hesitation he caught hold of the rough side of the rock and began to clamber up to the opening he believed to be a chamber. And at last he was concealed in the side cavern, which was so far above the stairway, if such it may be called, that it was not likely it was ever used. Here he felt safe from intruders, and wearied with the last few hours happenings he dropped down upon the stone floor and went to sleep.

Now, it so happened that this chamber had been used as a bedchamber by whoever had possession here, and if our young hero had gone back farther into the depth of the cavern he would have found a softer couch; for beyond this was a second chamber wherein a light was burning. Its feeble rays could not penetrate to the apartment where Ben was sleeping, and therefore, could not be discovered by one entering the main part of the cave. The retreat to which Ben had climbed for safety was reached by the rightful occupant by means of a ladder, which was then drawn up after him.

The light that burned in the inner chamber was made of rags, soaked in oil, or rather tallow obtained from the wild deer. A little scooped-out place in the rock floor held the tallow, and furnished a light that was kept burning night and day. A store of cakes of tallow and twisted rags was near the wall. And against the walls, ready for use, were firearms, and all kinds of implements of war. A goodly store of ammunition, a bucket of water, some dried venison and other provisions were near at hand. Besides the opposite wall, and more in the shadow was the couch of soft skins referred to.

All these things the boy-scout discovered on waking and continuing his investigations. Had he discovered them before he would hardly have dared to sleep in the heart of another's privacy, not knowing whether that other was friend or foe.

"Well, here's a pretty kittle of fish!" he soliloquized when he beheld the furnishings of what he had deemed his stronghold. "This place is already inhabited, and I am likely to be discovered at any moment. How did any one, not a regular climber like myself, manage to get up here? Heigh-ho! but this is a place in which to defy the Indians! No chance for them to enter except by the way the present intruder came; and from there they could be picked off as fast as they attempted it. And provisions and ammunition enough to last a month. If it were not for the fact that the folks would not go on without me, I believe I would settle down to a residence here—at least till the grub gave out."

He went back to the outer cavern and peered over the edge up which he had climbed. It looked so steep and difficult of descending that he was not sure but he must make a virtue of necessity and remain indefinitely, or risk breaking his neck making the descent.

While lying there undecided just what was best to be done, his attention was attracted by a noise near the outer entrance in the cavern below him. Some one had entered and was coming up the incline toward the steps. It could be no other than the rightful owner, he thought, and he was caught like a rat in a trap, for it was too late to leave the place, and this part of the stronghold would be visited before long.

If there was only some nook into which he might crawl out of sight, or some shelf of rock onto which he might climb and remain undiscovered till he could find a chance to escape! He knew the working of the entrance well enough to be able to get out if once he could gain the doorway without detection. And surely, there were no savages outside or the individual now approaching could not have gained an entrance.

"This is a predicament, to be sure!" he muttered. "But stay! suppose it should be Indians? Suppose they found the way to roll back the stone? Then I am safer here than anywhere else, for they will not know of this place, and if it came to that I could defend it against all odds."

But soon he heard voices, and discovered it was not Indians with whom he had to deal.

"Ah, outlaws, just as I thought in the first place. Now, Ben, my boy, what will you do? You can't fight outlaws in their own retreat. I suppose they will either kill me or force me to join their band. I will join them if, instead of making me rob emigrants they will let me kill Indians, or scout for them. They will want the Indians killed off, and they will need a scout."

If, as Ben assumed, his unseen visitors were robbers, and they had really been in need of some one to kill off Indians and to act as their scout, I am afraid they would have laughed had Ben offered his services. But the laugh would have been on them for not knowing a good thing when they saw it. For Ben was more capable than one would suppose him to be for his years. And not once during his late experiences had he been what one might call frightened. His main desire for escape had been because he wanted to warn his friends. Otherwise, he would have considered his experiences as something of a lark.

But now, as he thought of Bessie and Robert and the contemplated attack on the wagon train, he was in despair, and determined to escape the moment the intruders were up the "stairway."

They were passing him now, talking low to each other, and to his amazement he heard Robert Hamlin's voice. He waited till they were out of hearing, and then cautiously climbed down from his elevated chamber. He had changed his mind now; he would follow the men up the "stairs" before he took to flight, and learn if one of them was really Robert, and if so, what had become of Bessie.

He could hear them in front of him. But several times he came close up against a wall, and could go no further till he had struck a match and found where the steps turned and led in a different direction, but always still upward. At last he came to a broad, level space, which was the floor of another cavern. He could hear the lingering footsteps of the men ahead of him, and followed after, till at length he stood in another and larger chamber, where a light similar to the one he had left was burning.

He paused just inside and leaned closely against the wall. He was outside the radius of light.

He waited breathlessly till the two had halted where the light fell upon their faces. One of them was an old man, with white hair and beard, and the other was Robert Hamlin. What was he doing here without Bessie? Ben decided to find that out at once; and stepping into the light confronted the two men.

"Robert Hamlin!" he demanded, "where is Bessie? Have you deserted her?"

CHAPTER VII.

WENONA.

When the Indian Ben had slain gave his death yell causing his comrades to give chase, Bessie trembled for the safety of our hero. But she believed in the efficacy of his young legs and his ability to take care of himself. Still, she could not rest till she learned that the savages had returned baffled and unable to find him.

During the search, and while her mind was yet in suspense, Wenona, to quiet her, sat down and told her story, so far as she knew it herself.

"It was many moons ago," she said, "we come, parents, young, happy, with little papoose, Wenona. We come in wagon train, like palefaces here—we palefaces, too. I hear squaws talk, they no see Wenona hear. They say father not killed, he get away. Mother tied to stake, fire started, Wenona on her breast. She die quick, no burn. Bullet from white man kill his squaw quick, so she no have to burn.

"Wenona no killed, mother dropped papoose when shot kill her. Indian catch it, save it from fire, keep it, name it Wenona and make it slave."

"And your father, poor girl? Did you never find him? Where is he?"

"He is hermit—white hair and beard; not old, but white hair—much trouble. He live in cave and kill Indians. He not know his baby saved. Indians move away then, come back some moons after. He never know. I hear squaws talk."

"Ah," breathed Bessie, "he has lived for revenge on the Indians for the death of his wife and child. How he must have loved you both! You want the Indians killed, don't you, Wenona?"

"Wenona white girl, she no kill."

"But they killed your dear mother."

"White man not kill, he white."

"I know white men should not kill. But neither should Indians. And if they kill my Robert I will find this hermit, and live with him, and help him kill Indians."

"Then white girl not all white."

"Yes, I am, Wenona. I do not mean all I say, I suppose, but I feel that way when I think of what fate may overtake Robert and myself. Wenona, if that horrid Indian tries to marry me, I shall kill him, I know I shall."

"Big Wolf—he been here; Wenona saw him leave. He bad Indian. White girl must escape—go back to her people."

"You must not let me escape, Wenona. They will kill you."

"Wenona ready to die."

"No, no; not yet. You have a father. If you could manage to go to him, you could persuade him to leave this sort of life and take you back to the settlements. Oh, dear girl! you must escape with me! I will be your sister. We will find your father, if we can, and I will tell him your story. I will teach you to talk as I do, and he will see that you are of white blood. How old were you when the redskins adopted you?"

"Wenona just walk, so squaws say."

"You were about a year old then. Was there no mark upon your body by which your father might recognize you?"

The young girl held out her bare arm on which was a peculiar formation raised above the skin. It was in the shape of a heart, and red in color.

"That always been there. He know that, maybe."

"Wenona, if we can make our escape from here tonight and reach the camp of the palefaces they will protect you, and I will induce them to help find your father. We will take you with us, and we will all live happy together in the West. Hal, the Scout, will find him."

The Indian girl was silent a moment, then she said:

"Wenona go."

"Oh, I am so glad! It was for some purpose that Robert and I was foolish enough to go away from camp and get into the hands of the savages. But Robert and Ben! What will become of them?"

Bessie was beginning to grow hysterical now.

"Have they returned—the Indians? Have they captured Ben? Oh, Wenona, go and see!"

"They not come yet. You hear heap noise when they come."

"Can we help them to escape, too, Wenona?"

"Hal help them. Who is Hal?"

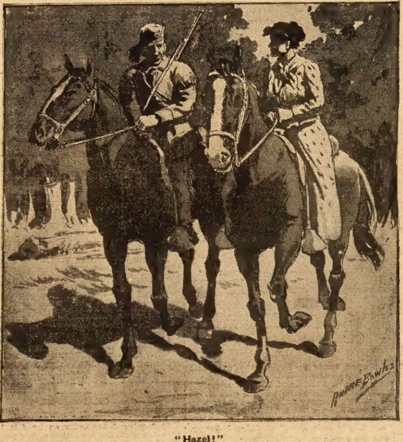
"Hal is a scout who is guiding us through the Indian country. He rides ahead of us, and if he finds any signs of Indians he rides back and turns us from our course, and takes us around by another way. If we cannot go around then he helps us fight our way through. We have had two skirmishes already, and tonight they will have to fight for dear life."

"Is Hal brave white man?"

"Very brave, and handsome, too."

"Does Hal kill Indians?"

(Continued on page fifteen.)



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New York's bonded debt is $1,000,000,000. Great!

A man's gall doesn't necessarily embitter his life.

Even an old hen may appreciate a toothsome dainty.

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America is the land of the brave and the home of the free lunch.

No, Alonzo, the family tree of the scrub-lady isn't necessarily a scrub oak.

Forgive your enemies—but if you have no enemies forgive a few of your friends.

The wise man goes on a still hunt for opportunity instead of waiting for it to call.

If all tombstones told the truth his Satanic majesty would have a fire sale and quit business.

Congress will oblige the people of forty-six States and several territories by proceeding to get busy.

Carefully note the enthusiasm with which Congress does not warm up to the postal savings bank proposition.

There are men who would not kick an enemy when he was down—preferring to jump on him with both feet.

Albert, as we see the thing, is a Belgian heir. Which, when you come to think of it, does not in the least resemble a Welsh rabbit.

On the part of mankind in general there will be no loud, imperious demand for the discovery of the South Pole for several years to come.

Some persons will have to revise their opinions of socialists after reading of the vigorous antiliquor campaign being carried on by them in Germany.

Sundry hasty remarks uttered by Mr. John R. Bradley lead us to infer that it will be an exceedingly North polar day when he finances another arctic expedition.

It is proposed that a new State be carved out of northern California and southern Oregon. The scheme might not be so bad, but think of giving the new State the name of Siskiyou!

If you mingled freely with poor, weak mortals yesterday doubtless you heard a number of times that the toll demanded by Christmas shopping was what caused it to be the shortest day.

As an evidence of the modesty of American millionaires we note that when the $10,000,000 widow married the $20,000,000 lawyer and sailed for Europe on the Mauretania the happy couple refrained from buying the boat for the honeymoon.

There is a popular superstition that it is to please the children that middle-aged men put on cotton whiskers and disport before the Christmas tree. That is another of the superstitions that will not stand the test of science. Clever mind readers assure us that it is the performer who gets the joy out of it if there is any.

The Philpot Robbery

The Mystery of a $100,000 Theft

By Paul Gray

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Begun in No. 52, December 25. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from the news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER X.

A RESOLVE IN THE DARK.

IT NEEDED no further word for Phil to recognize Gregg in his companion in peril. That stutter was unmistakeable.

"Oh, no, you're not as bad off as that," Phil hastened to reassure the suffering man. "Spunk up and you'll be all right soon."

"Oh, my head," moaned Gregg, "it feels as if it was being pressed between two giant hammers and all the contents were being squeezed out of it."

"Nothing like that; you've just had a hard wallop on the skull but you'll soon be over that."

"Where am I, anyway?" Gregg slowly asked. "Am I blind? I can't see a thing although my eyes are wide open."

Phil in amazement noticed that the stutter he had at first heard in the other's voice had entirely disappeared. He wondered if he had made a mistake in his recognition.

"You're locked up in the steel room in Red Mike's place," answered Phil, "and I guess you're not blind. It's black as night in here and then some. Say, my friend, is your name Gregg?"

"You've guessed right," said the other painfully.

"Then what's become of your stutter?"

"Why, have I lost it?" queried Gregg, his voice, despite his weakness, betraying his excitement.

"You surely have."

Gregg broke into a half-crazy laugh. When the paroxysm had passed, he said breathlessly:

"It was that blow on the head that did it. The doctors used to tell me that some sudden influence like that might cure it. But how did you know my name was Gregg and that I had a stutter?"

"Oh, you and I have met before," responded Phil as a grim smile passed across his face. "Don't you remember the fellow who pinned you down after a tussle in the Philpot house a little while ago?"

"The bogus safe man," exclaimed Gregg. "Well, of all the queer things. Wait a minute." Then after a pause he continued: "I begin to see just how it has worked out. You're a detective, of course. I saw that as soon as I spotted you up there this afternoon. You laid for me when I came out of the house and trailed me down here. They suspected you for something and shoved you in here."

"I suppose I might as well own to the truth. Things are about as you state them except that I am no detective."

"What are you doing all this tracking for and running into all these dangers for then?"

Phil suddenly decided to be open with the prostrate figure beside him and see if he could not affect some good. Their situation was desperate enough and simulation would probably not aid it any. So he replied whisperingly:

"I'm a newspaper reporter."

"Oh," said Gregg shortly, "and you're trying to get at the bottom of that mystery up at Philpot's."

"You've guessed right," said Phil. Then after a pause he went on: "And I want you to help me clear it up."

"Don't ask me," blurted the other. "As sure's I'm lying here with maybe no chance of getting up alive, I'm tellin' you I don't know a thing about it."

The man's sincerity was unmistakable. Phil did not hesitate in immediately dismissing him from all connection with the robbery of the Philpot jewels. Yet he was not sure that Gregg could not reveal some clue through his association with the Red Mike gang that might ultimately aid him in tracking the theft down. He was brought back to the peril of his present position by his companion asking:

"Maybe you don't know what it means to be locked up in this steel room?"

"Not exactly," replied Phil. "I've heard a good deal about how desperate this bunch of crooks is and how they've got the discredit of getting victims in here and then never letting them out alive."

"They deserve all the bad reputation they've got and then some. 'Taint very pleasant but I might as well tell you that here's where they keep their victims and they have a rule that they say 's never been broken: Nobody that gets into this room ever comes out alive except they're members of the gang."

Phil could not entirely repress a shudder at the grewsome words of his companion. Yet he was determined that if such was to be his fate, he would try to meet it with both eyes open and with his mind alert to take every chance at escape.

"But they won't treat you like that," said Phil. "You're one of the gang."

"Guess you don't know what they've got me in here for?"

"Well, I overheard a pair of them say they were going to try to get you to bleed you're mother."

"Right you are. The two worst in the whole bunch—Burley and Jellup—tried to get me to write a note home, telling her to send me twenty thousand dollars inside of twenty-four hours or they'd make a corpse o' me."

"And you refused?"

"You're right I did. After seeing the old lady suffer like she did this afternoon—I ain't got no more heart for this business. Maybe you c'n stand the surprise when I tell you that I'd about made up my mind to break away w'en I come back this afternoon."

"Good for you," said Phil energetically. "But you don't think as long as you don't let them know you're not going to quit them that they'll maltreat you, do you?"

"I'm thinking, after they bind me up like this and give me a crack in the head that made me think for awhile that I was goin' to shuffle off, that they've got something a good deal worse in pickle for me if I don't do what they're askin' me to."

"And you're not going to give in to them?"

"Not if they draw and quarter me—and I wouldn't be a bit surprised if they tried some such punishment."

"And what do you suppose they'll do with me?"

"Oh, they'll probably crack you in the head tonight and drop you in the river later in a bag or a barrel."

"Well, I'm going to try to stave the end off as long as I can," whispered Phil, determinedly.

"Yes, let's stick out as long as we can," said Gregg. "That's kind of a joke though, ain't it with us tied up so tight that we can't raise a hand and hardly raise a decent breath?"

"Yes, we're likely to die in here of bad air before they think of us again."

"Never fear, they'll be back before we want 'em, you can make sure o' that."

Even as Gregg spoke they detected a fumbling at the door, followed by the turning of the key.

Phil made haste to turn himself back in the direction from which he thought he had traveled in trying to reach Gregg's side. He stopped himself abruptly, however, when he heard the door creak open and through veiled lids saw the faint glimmer from the light without steal across the floor. Then a confusion of footsteps drew near and three men stood over him. Burley and Jellup he faintly recognized but the third arrival was a stranger.

"Damn the whelp," growled the stranger, referring to Phil, "he's lying right on top of where I got my stuff stored. Kick 'im out of the way, will you."

CHAPTER XI.

RARE BOOTY.

Phil winced inwardly as he felt himself roughly picked up, carried a few paces and then dropped unceremoniously near the farther wall of the room but he was glad that Burley and Jellup who had performed the task had let him down in a position that allowed him a chance to carefully scan the group of newcomers.

"He's dead to the world, all right," said Burley as he leaned over and studied Phil's face. "He must have got an awful crack."

"How about the other guy?" asked the strange voice.

Jellup and Burley moved across the room to where Gregg lay, a pool of red beside his head.

"He's in dreamland, too," replied Burley. "That crack he got in the dome has leaked a bit."

"Here, Jellup, ordered the stranger in an authoritative tone, "you stay by the doors there prepared to give the alarm if you hear the slightest creak."

"All right, Mike," was the subservient reply.

Through his slits of eyelids Phil cautiously took in the scene in the scant light that made its uncertain entry through the doorway.

The newcomer—addressed by Jellup as "Mike"—was probably the leader of this infamous band into whose hands he had fallen, he thought. In him he saw a medium-sized man with shoulders of an enormous breadth and arms of a length and hands of a size that reminded him of the awesome figures of giants he had seen when a boy. His face was smooth shaven and the skin hardened and glossy as though it had been frozen to the bones. His eyes were small, unceasingly on the move and strangely suggestive of cold cruelty. His forehead was broad and high and from beneath the brim of his hat showed his close-cropped hair—a brilliant red.

"Well named," thought Phil when his scrutiny had been completed. "I'll never forget that face if I'm lucky enough to get out of here and have a chance to see it again."

Meanwhile Mike and Burley had knelt upon the floor near the middle of the room. The former extracted a small bag of tools from a pocket and quickly set to work upon one of the steel squares. First using a screw driver and then a chisel he was soon able to raise the cover of a hole nearly two feet square. Laying it to one side he said:

"Now, Burley, give us a steady hand on the box."

By dint of much effort the pair slowly raised out of the depths a square case, evidently of steel. Resting it on the floor beside him, Mike inserted a key turned it and then threw back the heavy top.

"I'm going to show you the finest lot of shiner's" he said with a trace of pride in his hard voice, "that you ever set your peepers on. Just look at that sparkler, will you?"

So saying he tenderly lifted a magnificent diamond necklace by its ends and raised it above his head.

"How'd you like that?" he continued as

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his steely eyes crept hungrily along the massive stones set in the strand. "Ain't she a beaut?"

It assuredly was. Even in the dim light the scores of close-set stones scintillated like coals of clear fire. As Red Mike slowly swung the necklace to and fro, the eyes of the two kneeling men followed its stream of shimmering light as if fascinated.

"Worth a cool twenty-five thousand plunks if it's worth a copper," commented Red Mike as he gingerly replaced the necklace in the box.

"And so is this," he continued, drawing up a coronet of pearls that looked fit to grace the head of the fairest queen that ever lived. Every pearl was of uniform size and shone with rare luster.

"And yo' aint goin' t' tell us where you swiped 'em?" queried Burley.

"Didn't I tell you blokes I'd bring you up and show you 'em if you'd agree not to ask me embarrassin' questions about 'em? W'y don't you stick to your promise? You don't think I want to run the risk of losin' 'em f'r the five thousand reward that's out for 'em, do you? Some of you blokes might do me dirt."

"Five thousand reward? Necklace and pearls?" retorted Burley. "W'y, them must be the Philpot jewels."

"Don't get gay wi' your guessin'," growled Red Mike, as he replaced the coronet. "Just as soon as it's safe, I'm goin' to break 'em up into singles stones and try to get rid of some of 'em. It's too much valuable stuff to let lay around loose up here."

"An' you ain't goin' to let us in on how you got 'em?" persisted Burley whose professional curiosity as a burglar induced him to quiz his leader on the method by which he had effected such an impressive haul.

"Well, since you want to know so badly, I can tell you that, though they may be the Philpot jewels, I didn't have to go into the Philpot house to get 'em," and Red Mike cast a cynical grin at both Burley and Jellup as he noted their amazement.

"Just wanted to see if they were all safe," he went on as he lifted a giant handful of rich rings from the depths and then let them slowly dribble back into the hiding place. "It seemed so good and they come so easy, I thought once or twice since I planted 'em here that it was only a dream. so easy. "It seemed so good oonewduptho But it's true enough, all right," and with Burley's aid he set about replacing the strong box in the hole beneath the floor. When the steel plate had been returned and properly screwed down, the two men stiffly rose to their feet.

"And so you want me to help yo' use this here guy to wheedle twenty thousand simoleons out of the Philpot woman eh?" said Red Mike, turning to where Gregg lay. "Don't you think I've got enough loot out o' that house for awhile?"

"Oh, we don't want yo' to run any o' the risks," replied Burley; "we jus' want yo' t' give us some idees, mebbe."

"Well, brace 'im up and let's begin then," declared Mike sharply.

Burley sent Jellup after water, clothes and some whisky. When they were brought, Gregg was braced against the wall, the wound in his head washed and a liberal drink of whisky forced between his lips.

Under this treatment he found it impossible to feign unconsciousness longer. He slowly opened his eyes and dully observed the group about him.

"Come back to life at last, eh?" grunted Burley. "Well, we're ready to do business with you, now or finish the job on your carcass."

Gregg made no reply, but into his eyes crept a look of bitter antagonism.

"D'you hear," broke in Red Mike with an oath, "we're ready to do business wi' you."

Gregg still maintained his stubborn silence.

Burley drew his foot back and then drove it savagely into Gregg's side.

"D'yo' hear me," he growled, "we're ready to let you sign that little note for twenty thousand from your ma," he ended with a grin.

Angered by this mistreatment, Gregg blurted out:

"You may be ready, but I'll be blamed if I am."

"Good for you," whispered Phil to himself, "I like your spunk."

"He's got ugly," said Red Mike. "Guess there's no use foolin' wit' him. Better give him th' third degree an' see if that won't drive some sense into his head."

"The third degree?" thought Phil. "Why up here that means they'll torture the poor fellow even to death if necessary. The friends."

"Bring in the straps, the clock and the light," Red Mike ordered Jellup. The latter was soon back with four stout straps, a long sperm candle and a small clock that ticked merrily in the stifling room.

"One more chance we'll give you," Red Mike ejaculated, "before we put the screws on. Will yo' sign what these kind gentlemen want yo' to," and he grimaced cruelly, at the same time shooting a sly wink at his two associates.

"I'll sign nothing," responded Gregg determinedly.

"Strap him up then, boys," ordered Red Mike.

CHAPTER XII.

THE THIRD DEGREE.

Red Mike's orders were executed with alacrity. Gregg was carried to the middle of the room and laid face upward. Then around his feet two of the straps were fastened, screws in the other ends of them being twisted firmly through tiny holes in the steel plates of the floor.

Then two more straps were fastened securely around his arms. The loose ends were drawn tightly and the screws fastened in their tight-fitting holes in the floor. From the neatness and dispatch with which the men worked, it was evident that Gregg was not the first who had undergone the stress of torture. The straps had been drawn so taunt that it seemed as if his legs could not bear the strain without giving way. For one moment he half considered a surrender to the captors at work over him. Then he gritted his teeth and vowed he'd never give in.

"Now the table and the sword," ordered Red Mike when he had felt of the fastened straps.

Jellup quickly produced from out of the room close by the steeled apartment a small table. This was placed within a few feet of Gregg's leg straps. On top of the table, so that the prostrate man could look upon its face without difficulty, was placed the clock. Beside it was firmly fixed the candle.

Meanwhile Jellup brought in a sword whose sides flashed ominously in the dim light. From the hilt dangled a fine steel chain.

Red Mike grasped the fearsome weapon and examined its edge and point.

"Sharp enough to run through a foot of oak," he chuckled so that Gregg could well hear. "'Twon't be hard for it to cut through a few inches of human flesh and a few thin ribs."

He cast his cruel eyes down at the bound figure but in its face there was no indication of surrender.

"And you haven't made up your mind to do as we want you to?" asked the ringleader.

"I havn't," sighed Gregg, painfully, "and I won't."

"All right," said Red Mike, "remember you've picked your own fate."

So saying, he knelt beside the prostrate figure. Drawing down one of the strands of the rope which wrapped Gregg's chest, he applied the point of the sword to his clothes deftly and cut away a hole about four inches square, leaving the bare flesh exposed. Throwing the sundered cloth aside, he rose and handed the weapon to Burley.

"You can hang it now," he ordered.

Burley mounted the table and unfastening a small square in the ceiling, barely large enough to permit the passage of his hand, passed the chain attached to the sword hilt upward and fastened it to some unseen contrivance.

Swinging free the sword moved unsteadily to and fro and then settled its point directly above the bared spot in Gregg's breast and about three feet from it.

Gregg watched the hideous preparations without sign of fear.

"Well," murmured Phil to himself, as he slyly watched the methods by which this reckless band hoped to effect another of its startling coups in thieving, "that lad's got more grit than I've given him credit for. I believe four men out of five would have caved in before this."

When Burley had descended from the table, Red Mike moved to where he could look their victim directly in the face.

"Now, my young man," he began "I ain't much given to braggin' but anyone that knows Red Mike well knows that he never makes no mistake about doin' what he says he will. He allus keeps his promise both ways. We've given you a fair chance to do what we want y' to do. You havn't done it. All right, if that's your way. But now we're goin' to make you do it—an' this ain't no joke—goin' to make yo' do it or you'll die right where yo' lay, d'ye hear? die right where yo' lay."

Red Mike paused a moment for the full intent of his words to permeate the prisoner's mind. At the same time he cast a glance toward Phil to see if there were a conscious witness of the scene. Then he went on:

"Now lemme explain a thing or two t' yo' before we leave you for a time. This candle here" and he pointed to the one they had fixed firmly in the table, "is timed to burn just thirty minutes. With its light after we have closed the doors and bolted you in yo' will be able t' see the face of this clock. It is now just half past seven which, I think, is nigh th' right time." The speaker drew a massive gold watch from his pocket and glanced at its face. "Yes, jus' right; ha' past seven. I'll light the candle so, see." He struck a match and applied it to the wick which slowly flamed up and then settled into a steady glow. "Now this candle 'll burn jus' thirty minutes or till th' clock here strikes eight. Then it'll die out."

Again Red Mike paused, passed his tongue over his lips as though he enjoyed the mental agony his words were intended to inflict on his victim and then continued:

"Now we're comin' to th' critical point, so remember it well. In that little hole d'rectly over you where that sword hangs one of us is goin' t' take our place for th' nex' half hour. If durin' that time we hear yo' say good an' plain 'I'll do it, I'll do it', all well an' good. But if we don' hear you say it, jus' as soon as that candle flame dies down and goes out, that sword over your heart's goin' to be let go and it's long enough an' sharp enough to go clean through you and strike the floor under yo', d'yo hear? Sharp enough to go clean through yo'" and the speaker appeared to dwell on the phrase with cruel unction.

He waited a moment in silence as if to give Gregg an opportunity to say something if he desired. But Gregg's lips remained sealed.

Then he approached the spot where Phil lay, writhing inwardly at the hideous scene he felt impended. He stooped over the almost breathless figure, scanned the closed eyes, put his hand against the face where a few spots of blood from the wound of Gregg had dried and then rose.

"You fellers must'a put an awful dint in this chap's head. Mebbe yo' fractured his skull."

"Tain't as bad as that," said Burley. "Anyway, it don't make no difference if he don't come out of it."

"Well, he can't make no trouble fer us till we git done wi' this other one, so we c'n jes' leave 'im where he is."

The three moved toward the doors. Reaching them Mike paused and looked back at the grewsome scene.

"Two minutes gone," he exclaimed solemnly, "you've got jus' twenty-eight of 'em left. Better make good use of 'em."

But Gregg held his peace. Then he heard the door clang to and the bolt thrown shut. Above him swung the perilous sword, about him seemed to close down a suffocating atmosphere like that of some death hole.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SWORD OF DEATH.

The noise of the closing door had barely subsided ere Phil Pry, suffering agony as he was from the bonds that held him so tightly, slowly and painfully rolled himself close beside his imperiled companion.

"You're a plucky one, all right," he whispered to Gregg. "I expected to hear you yield to these wretches every minute."

Gregg turned his head slightly so that he could look into Phil's face. His features were drawn and pale from the pain of his position.

"I don't know how I stood 'em off," he gasped. "I believe if you hadn't been within hearing distance so as to kind o' brace me up, I'd have given in to the whelps. They've certainly got me tied up good and tight. My legs feel as if they were being drawn out of their sockets."

"I wish I could do something to help you, but I'm almost as powerless as you are. They certainly know how to tie a fellow up."

Gregg half-anxiously cast his eyes around at the face of the clock, the tick of which seemed to fill the room as by a deathlike toll. A faint shiver ran through his stiffened frame as he saw that the hands were registering twenty-five minutes to eight. Five minutes of his allotted thirty had flown by and he was as far from rescue as when the dread sentence of Red Mike was first pronounced.

"I'm almost burning up with thirst," whispered Gregg, "and my head is throbbing as if it'd bu'st where they gave me that awful crack. Well, I've been a tough guy, so I suppose I ought t' have looked forward t' some such end as this. But I certainly 'd like a chance t' die fightin' and on my feet."

"Don't give up yet," encouraged Phil. "Something may happen to let you out safe, And besides, I don't believe they'd dare to do to you what they've threatened."

"You don't, eh?" answered Gregg. "Well, you don't know 'em as well as I do. I won't be the first one that's been carted out o' here cold an' stiff after bein' maltreated somethin' like this. I haven't trained wi' this gang even for a few weeks 'thout learning how desperate and cruel they c'n be. And besides, they've got another mark ag'in me. They know I'd turn squealer on 'em if I ever got loose and they ain't running no risks on what I might blab. It's all right, old man, to try to brace me up, but I know a good deal better'n you do the tough gang I'm up against."

The positiveness in Gregg's words drove Phil into silence. Try as he did, he could think of no encouragement for this helpless yet determined figure beside him. Once he considered suggesting to him that he consent to the proposal of the blackmailers and trust that their plans might fail, but decided that it would not be right to interfere with the purpose of a brave man—for Gregg's recent conduct had certainly entitled him to that appellation—even though death thus stared him in the face.

He watched the condemned man's eyes flash their way to the face of the clock again. It registered twenty minutes to eight. Only twenty minutes remained before that keen-pointed blade above him would break loose from its bonds and, descending, cut its way through his heart.

"You're sure you can't slip out of those bonds?" queried Phil, groping for words to divert Gregg's mind from his peril.

"I've wrenched and turned again an' again," came the reply in half-pant of torture, "but they hold me as if they had been riveted to me with steel."

Even as he spoke he gave an additional wrench at the bonds, but the only result was to increase his pain and show him anew the fruitlessness of any effort to break loose.

"It's useless, old man," he gasped from his exertions. "The strongest guy that ever drew breath couldn't break out o' this."

The little clock ticked rapidly away. Both men heard each tick as of some resounding funeral bell. Each man realized that each of those hurrying ticks dragged one of them nearer to a frightful death. Phil almost groaned in his helplessness. He writhed and twisted at his own bonds, but they loosened not a whit.

Gregg's eyes were now fastened on the clock as though fascinated. His face each moment grew more haggard. All indications of strength appeared to be passing from him. Yet his purpose faltered not. Just as the timepiece registered fifteen minutes to eight, he turned his head slightly toward Phil and whispered brokenly:

"If yo' get out o' this hole alive, my friend, I want yo' to hunt up my mother and tell her what I did at the end. I'd like her to know that I wasn't such a bad sort after all."

Near the end the words came brokenly and ended in something that resembled a dry sob. Then he went on:

"But I haven't got any hope that you'll get out o'here alive to tell anybody any-

(Continued on page ten.)

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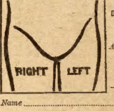

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Lincoln Watch and Jewelry Co., 3371 Mosprat St., Chicago

Compulsory Self-Denials.

"So you think there is good in everything."

"Yes, sir," said the ready-made philosopher.

"How about those fictitious mining stocks I bought?"

"They have improved your habits. Nothing stimulates personal economy like bad investments."

Necessary Expense.

First Kid—De umpire in de big baseball games gits big money fer umpirin' games.

Second Kid—Yes, but den it all goes fer life insurance.

The Thoughtful Manager.

Mrs. de Style (in theater box)—What was this placard, "No Loud Talking," put in our box for?

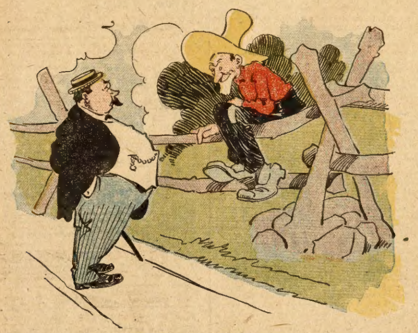
Mrs. Forundred (after reflection)—I presume the manager left it here so we could show it to the people on the stage when their chatter interrupts our conversation.

Wooden Girl.

Katie—And de novel says de heroine had a willowy form, used to pine for her lover and would spruce up when she seed him comin' froo de gate.

Susie—Gee! Where did she work—in a saw mill?

HIS OPINION.



Citiguy—I should like to buy a farm with a good frontage.

Hank—I shud think you hed about all th' frontage you could carry right now, mister!

His Specialty.

"I don't believe you would work if you had the opportunity," scoffed the industrious housewife.

"Dat's where you do me an injustice, mum," sniffed Sandy Pikes, as he wiped away a tear. "For ten long years I've been trying to get an open-work job in a drug store."

"An open-work job in a drug store? What kind of a job is that?"

"Why, cutting holes in porous plasters, mum."

Heard at the Crossroads.

"Oh, you hayseeds may laugh at this machine," snorted the irate motorist, as he plunged around in the roadway mire, "but it has more horse power than all your country teams put together."

"Gosh all hemlock, mister," drawled the old farmer who was sitting on the fence chewing a straw, "it must have more pig power from the way it flounders around there in the mud."

His Limit.

"And do you intend to ride on fast freights the rest of your life?" asked the housewife, as she handed out the pumpkin pie.

"Ah, no, mum," responded Gritty George, with a Chesterfield bow, "I am only waiting for de aeroplanes to be built for two, mum."

"Built for two?"

"Yes, 2 cents."

British Innocence.

"Over in London," drawled the British tourist, "some of the hotels have hops every evening, 'pon me word they do."

"Well," laughed the clerk in the American hostelry, "over here we have bellhops."

"Ha, bellhops? And is that a dwance with bells?"

Brown's Specialty.

Director—Our work is so divided that each of our men has the work he is best fitted for. Jenks is treasurer, Smith secretary, and Brown is——

"But Brown is as deaf as a post!"

"And Brown has all the complaints referred to him."

Rather Strenuous.

Mr. Cassidy—Awn will yez listen to this, Nora? A Baltimore mon hugged his woife so toightly on th' golden wedding thot he broke two av her ribs.

Mrs. Cassidy—Ah, Patrick, awn isn't ut grand to see such affection after all thim years?

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$5 a Day Easily Made Selling GLASSES
Agents wanted. Send for catalog
Coulter Optical Co. Chicago

$18 TO $30 A WEEK SURE
SELLING "EVER-READY" TOOL KIT
Success positive. Weaver (farmer) made $1,500 last year. A Hason, O. sold 21 first day. You can do as well. Sells on sight. Think, 10 tools in 1. Free Sample to hustlers. Reserve territory today.
Foote Mfg. Co., Dep't 408 Dayton, Ohio

Just Suited Him.

"Yes," remarked the man in the long overcoat, "I have always found the old horseshoe lucky."

"Lucky!" groaned the automobile owner. "Would you call them lucky when we motorists run over them and the nails puncture our tires?"

"I certainly would, sir."

"Then, sir, you must be an idiot."

"Oh, no, my friend; I am merely a tire manufacturer."

The American Climate.

Visitor—Do you get out of school at one o'clock?

Little Girl—Yes, ma'am. We have only one session at our school.

Visitor—Indeed! I thought they had two sessions there?

Little Girl—No, ma'am. We always have one session, except when the weather is pleasant.

The Fount of Knowledge.

Mr. de Science—The officers of the Smithsonian Institution are having the chatter of monkeys phonographed, in the hope that in time their language may be understood, and it may be possible to converse with them.

Mrs. De Science—Isn't that grand! I hope they'll ask the monkeys, the very first thing, whether we are descended from them or not.

Doctors Differ.

Lady—You say, professor, that tobacco is an aid to thought and a stimulant to the reasoning faculties; but Professor Greathead says tobacco is in every way injurious. How do you account for that difference?

The Professor—Easily enough, madam. Professor Greathead does not smoke, and consequently he can neither think straight nor reason correctly.

Modern Hercules.

The manager of the sideshow was before the bar for kidnaping.

"Yes, judge," he confessed solemnly, "in a moment of weakness I sneaked into the museum and carried the fat lady away in my arms."

"In a moment of weakness!" gasped the judge, who remembered that the fat lady tipped the scales at 550 pounds. "Great Scott, man! What would you have done in a moment of strongness?"

Not Quite.

First Sailor—They tell me that Bill Bobstay took on board so much booze that he got to seeing things.

Second Sailor—Not quite. The cook gave us macaroni for dinner and Bill thought it was snakes.

Giving Pa Away.

Ma—So pa took advantage of my absence and searched the bureau where I keep my diary?

Ostend—Yes, ma; and he said that was what he called a "bureau of information."

Waste of Time.

Ethel—How is it you refused to go automobiling with Sloboy again?

Maude—Oh, what was the use? It took both his hands to steer the machine.

Beyond Belief.

New Rector (St. Fashion Church)—I regret to find an alarming proportion of doubters among my parishioners, Mrs. Forundred.

Mrs. Forundred—What else can you expect? The Bible says that the Four Hundred, and the people outside of it, all came from the same parents. It's ridiculous.

Not an Obstacle.

"But money doesn't always lead to happiness," said the poor young man who had just been handed the frigid mit.

"True," rejoined the fair owner of the cold-storage heart, "but it often facilitates the search."

Playing Safe.

Hyker—Jenkins tells me that he never spoke an unkind word to his wife.

Pyker—Well, I don't doubt it. Jenkins was always a cautious chap.

Little Wonder.

Visitor—And who is this poor man in the padded cell?

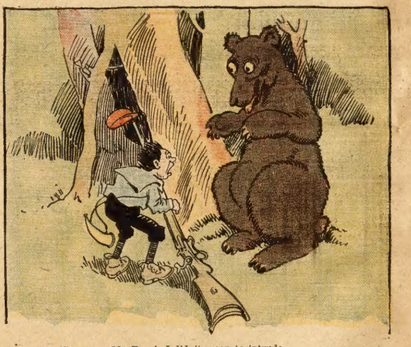
Attendant—Oh, he's the chap who tried to follow the advice of all his alleged friends.

Repartee.

Bat—Aw, you're always up in the air!

Ball—Stop your knocking.

TRUE HOSPITALITY.



Little Boy—'Scuse me, Mr. Bear! I didn't mean to intrude——

Mr. Bear—Don't mention it, little boy! You're just in time for dinner!

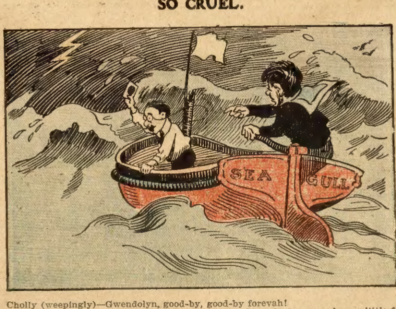
A Quick Remedy.

"Your daughter is getting very round-shouldered."

"Well, doctor, spare no expense. What's the best way to get her to sit up straight?"

"Buy her an automobile."

SO CRUEL.



Cholly (weepingly)—Gwendolyn, good-by, good-by forevah!

Sentimental Salt—Hi, thar; if you must bawl, had you just as soon lean a little farther over the side of this yere tub, so's yer lovely tears will fall into the deep and not inter this here already 'arf-filled craft?

Real Mantrap.

Gunner—What photograph is that you are placing in your desk?

Guyer—Why, it's the picture of a mantrap I took last summer.

Gunner—Indeed! Some tiger lair in the tropics, eh?

Guyer—Oh, no. It's a snapshot of a girls' bachelor club on a picnic.

Just Experimenting.

"You young scamp," shouted the owner of the ice pond, "don't you see that sign 'No Skating?'"

"Aw, yer don't call this skating, do yer, boss?" answered the lad who was learning. "It looks more like sitting down to me."

The Two Obstructions.

"Take off your hat!"
Rude men behind her cried,
And she (just think of it) complied;
But they were still unsatisfied,
And yelled with their mouths opened wide,
"Take off your rat!"

Hasty Backing Out.

Miss de Boney (schoolteacher)—I am informed that you loudly spoke of me on the public streets as an old maid.

Bad Boy (much scared)—N-o-o, ma'am. I said y'r mother was an ole maid.

Her Favorites.

Reggy Sapp—Ah, do you like outdoor sports, Miss Rose?

Miss Rose—No, they are too cheap. I prefer sports that can take a girl indoors and order an oyster supper.

A Revised Version.

Citizen—Why stand ye here all the day idle?

Loungers—We are city employes.

Just the Job.

Old Argus was boasting about his hundred eyes.

"A useful man for an office," cried the populace.

"Yes," added Argus, "and I can keep half of them closed when I want to."

Here the populace clapped their hands wildly.

"We'll make him custom-house inspector," they declared.

How to Get a Big Mail.

The publishers and manufacturers of the country are anxious to get names of people, so they can send papers, samples and catalogues to them. The Agents' Director List of Indiana, Pa., publish a little book every three or four months. This book has hundreds of names and addresses in it. You can have your name published in this Agents' Directory for only 10 cents in stamps, and you will get many times the cost in the value you receive in the way of free samples and mail. Just send 10 cents in silver or stamps to the Agents Directory List, Indiana, Pa.

Down at Bacon Ridge.

"By cricky," said the old postmaster at Bacon Ridge, in solemn tones, "things would be serious in this here town if a fire broke out during the next twenty-four hours."

"Firemen sick?" queried the soap salesman.

"Worse than that. It's wash day and every blamed one of their red shirts is hanging out to dry."

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

Sharp Enough at Times.

Foreigner—I am told that you Americans are very gullible.

Host—Well, we are easily taken in on woolly horses, white elephants, plans for extracting gold from sea water, stuffed mermaids, and such things; but I just tell you we can't be fooled by any of these office holders who say they don't want a renomination.

One on the Milkman.

"Well, I declare," exclaimed the milkman, facetiously. "A little fly has fallen into the milk can and seems to be calling to his mate on the edge of the can. Wonder what he is saying, anyhow?"

"Don't know, I am sure," laughed the housewife, "but perhaps he is saying: 'Come on in, the water's fine.'"

His Only Recreation.

"But why do you give your fashionable butler an entire day off every week?" asked the friend.

"Sh!" whispered the man who made a fortune in a few weeks. "It is the only opportunity I have to sit in my shirt sleeves and smoke. Wouldn't dare to do it when he was around."

An Attractive Woman.

Mrs. Slimdiet—I can't see what Mr. Bullion wanted to marry that shabby widow for, anyhow. She isn't young, and she isn't pretty, and she——

New Boarder—You just ought to see how she makes her pumpkin pies.

Deadly Subject.

Jack—But I thought she was much smitten with that handsome young palmist. He was always talking about the lines in her hands.

Katharine—Yes, but one day he happened to mention the lines in her face.

Hazarding a Guess.

Howe—Don't you know anything about golf?

Wise—Not much. Why?

Howe—What's a bunker? Do you know?

Wise—I suppose it's one of those cranks that simply live on the links.

The Foolish Man.

"I see," said the landlady, "that a man in Ohio has got himself into trouble by marrying two women."

"Huh!" growled the bachelor boarder, "just as though one wife couldn't make trouble enough!"

Looking Forward.

Mrs. Noear—Do you think my daughter will be a musician?

Professor—I gant zay. She may. She dell me she gome of a long-lived vamily.

Slow.

He—And may I kiss your hand?

She—Is that the way you've been brought up?

Not Always Wise.

He—I always like to hear a girl say what she thinks.

She—But girls who always say what they think generally think such disagreeable things!

Cause of the Increase.

Going downtown the other morning in the street car Judge Reid looked up from his newspaper. "I see that the publisher of Anybody's makes the claim that his magazine has a larger circulation than yours," he remarked to the proprietor of the Earth Monthly.

"Well, it's my fault if it has," snapped the other, "like a fool, I've been letting him run one of his ads in the Earth."

A Matter of Economy.

Business Man (furiously)—What do you mean by kissing my daughter?

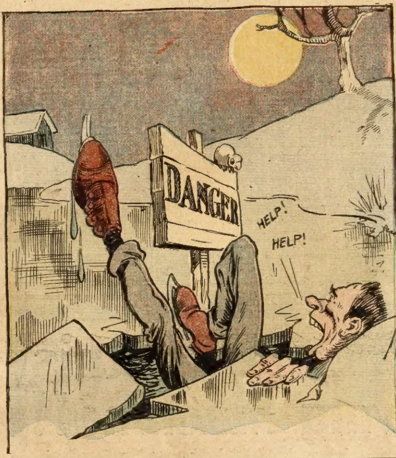
Underpaid Clerk (meekly)—I desired to show my appreciation of your daughter's loveliness, and kisses are the only things I could afford to give her.

Not So Bad After All,

Sam—If you didn't like being kissed why didn't you scream?

Sue—Well, you see, when I wanted to I couldn't, and when I could I didn't want to.

AN ICE-D SCREAM.


DANGER
HELP!
HELP!

Suggested by the Waiter.

Guest—Waiter, I wish you'd let me have a knife that's sharp enough to cut this steak.

Waiter—Sorry, sir, but we don't keep our knives sharp. Maybe you could use the steak as a strop, sir, and sharpen your knife up a bit.

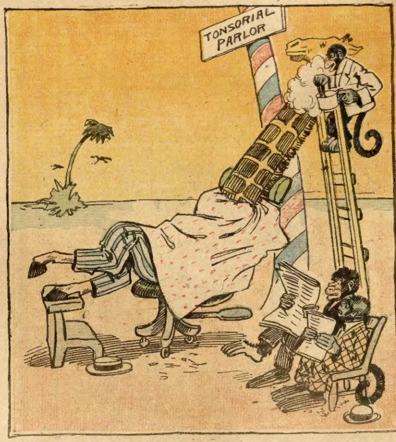
Loud Announcement.

Pearl—Yes, I heard of Belle's engagement all over the neighborhood.

Ruby—You did! Why, Belle promised not to whisper it to a soul.

Pearl—Oh, she didn't whisper it—she shouted it.

JUNGLE LIFE.



Chatters—That settles it! We won't get out of this barber shop for a week.
Simmy—What's up?
Chatters—Old Spots has just ordered his neck shaved.

AGENTS WANTED

SWIFTLIT

WORKS LIKE CITY GAS

In Your Home or Store. *No "Bonfire" to start it.*

Lights like a flash with ¼ of a match. That's a fact which will cost you only 1 cent a day to realize if you use a "Swiftlit" Lamp. *Think of that.* Radically different from any lamp you ever saw or heard of. *Just like City Gas* and better than a dozen kerosene lamps. Gives from 100 to 500 candle-light power—a penetrating soft light, the best to *read* or *sell* goods by, or it will *light your whole street front* if hung over outer door. No alcohol expense or tedious waiting. Acts simply by gravity or pressure feed. *Burners* which fit old lamps supplied cheaply. Thousands of "Swiftlit" Lamps are used by the people of the U. S. We were established in 1868. *You can't afford* to be without one. If you can be our Agent in your neighborhood, write for *wholesale price on specimen* "Swiftlit" Lamp. Now, don't put it off. Write *today.* Hear by return mail. *Then* order if you *want* to. You will. PLANET MFG. CO., Dept. 18, ST. LOUIS.

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EXPERIENCED AGENTS wanted to sell our goods and pay after delivering to customers. First-class references required. Address Moore Dress Goods Co., 335 Broadway, New York

PORTRAIT AND FRAME 55c. Pillow Tops 35c. 72 page cat. free. Agents wanted. Man'f'rs Portraits and Frames. National Portrait Co., Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS $30 A WEEK EXPENSES PAID. No experience or capital required, 30 days credit; photo pillow tops 80c; enlarged portraits, bromides, paintings, frames; lowest prices; samples and catalogue free. Dept.Z, Ritter Art Studio, Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS PORTRAITS 35c, Frames 15c. Sheet Pictures 1 cent, Stereoscopes 25c, Views 1c. 30 Days' Credit. Samples and Catalog Free. CONSOLIDATED PORTRAIT, Dept.4141, 1027 W.Adams St., Chicago

WE PAY $80 A MONTH SALARY and furnish rig and all expenses to introduce poultry and stock powders; new plan; steady work. Address BIGLER COMPANY, X418 SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS.

AGENTS. New Invention; never before sold in your territory; horse owners wild about them; automatic hame fastener sells at sight; coin money; fortune in your territory; free sample to workers; write at once. Automatic Fastener Co., G880, Cincinnati, Ohio

BIG MONEY selling our Metallic Sign Letters for office windows, store fronts and glass signs. Anyone can stick them on. Write for free sample. Metallic Sign Letter Co., 416 N. Clark, Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS Big money; something new; collect photographs for postcards; we make them for 1 cent apiece and less from your photographs; samples and particulars free. FIDELITY P. CO., 35 South Paulina St., Chicago.

Sell Tobacco and Cigars Locally or traveling. Salary or commission. Experience unnecessary—we give full instructions. Address MOROTOCK TOBACCO WORKS, Box H12 DANVILLE VIRGINIA

$5000 in Prizes to Davis AGENTS We give our agents unusually large profits for selling our high-grade soap and toilet specialties, and reward loyal and continued service with a share of our profits in premiums. $16 to $25 weekly easily made; hustlers as high as $100. Illus. catalog and profit sharing plan free. E. M. DAVIS SOAP COMPANY (Established 1898) 1472 Carroll Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

Two Rings GIVEN Sell ten packs Prof. Smith's Hair Tonic and Dandruff Remedy at 10c each. WE TRUST YOU. When sold return the $1 and we will send these 2 handsome rings, or choice from premium list. A reliable firm, estab. fourteen years. Rosebud Perfume Co., Box 185, Woodsboro, Md.

AGENTS $3 to $10 A DAY Selling this forged steel NICKEL PLATED 10 TOOLS IN 1 Combination Hatchet Durable, low priced. Guaranteed. Money back to any purchaser not perfectly pleased. Send today for terms of FREE OUTFIT and proof of big profits to Agents. H. THOMAS MFG. CO. 2117 Wayne St. Dayton, Ohio

A BOON TO EVERY HOUSEHOLD The Sanitary Aluminum Tea & Coffee Strainer This strainer is the product of a long series of experiments and far superior to any in the market. It is a constant joy to any housewife, as light as a feather, resplendent as silver, durable as steel. Being made in a solid piece it has no joints to catch dirt, contagious germs or to retain greasy substances. The metal of which it is constructed prohibits rust, and although far lighter, it will outlast best wire strainer. Sample 15c. Agents wanted. W. C. WATKINS, P.O.Box 1505, Pittsburg Pa.

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The Philpot Robbery.

(Continued from page seven.)

thing. You know too much about this haunt now to make it safe for them to let you live."

"Never worry about me," responded Phil. "I'll surely take your message to your mother if I can break away from these hounds and I haven't given up hope of doing something like that yet."

"This thirst and pain 's awful," slowly gasped Gregg. Then the faintest glimmer of a smile passed across his countenance as he went on: "Losing that old stutter didn't come in time to do me much good, did it?"

Phil held silent and in the quiet that ensued the two men heard a slight noise in the ceiling above them. It sounded like the loosening of a small steel plate above the slit through which the sword was suspended. Then came in muffled tones:

"Just ten minutes left for you now. Are you ready to give in yet?"

It was the voice of Red Mike, cruel and ominous.

Gregg stirred uneasily as his eyes noted the time, shivered within his bonds as if to assure himself he was not in the midst of a hideous dream and then blurted out, half angrily, half hysterically:

"No, never! no, never!" you fiends."

"Very well," came the solemn response; "just ten minutes more and the sword will fall." With that the hole appeared to close.

Gregg of a sudden wriggled violently in his bonds as if making one last desperate effort to break loose from them. But they gave not the barest trifle. Finding his effort unavailing he lay panting from his exertion while a shaking sigh broke from his lips.

Phil also made another determined effort to break the bonds which held him, or at least loosen them sufficiently to allow him the freedom of his hands. But the attempt was fruitless. He found himself able to roll about with an effort, but his arms and legs were held powerless as in a vise. He raged inwardly at his helplessness, but he suppressed his chagrin lest it disturb the last moments of the suffering man beside him.

Then unexpectedly like a toll of death a single clang within the clock registered five minutes to the hour of eight. The sound seemed to echo through the stifling air of the room like a summons to execution.

Phil turned his head so that he could look into Gregg's face. The latter's eyes were closed and from his pale, almost ghastly lips came sounds so low that Phil could not catch their full import. Toward the end, however, he heard words which indicated that the apparently doomed man was, in his uncouth and unpracticed way, uttering a feeble prayer.

As the lips ceased to move and Gregg slowly opened his eyes again, Phil saw that the clock registered two minutes to eight.

"Well," he murmured, half horrified and half angered at his own helplessness, "I am surely seeing how a brave man can die."

Simultaneously he heard the clatter of the opening of the hole in the ceiling and saw the sword begin to sway gently as if it were being released for its death-dealing drop.

The continuation of this thrilling story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscriptions, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

Mrs. Butterwick's Failing.

"Yes, sir," said Butterwick to me, the other day, in alluding to his wife, "she's an uncommon fine woman about most things; loves her children, makes splendid pies, don't fool with any of those fandangling ways women have of fixing their hair, and she's an angel for temper; but she's the awfulest woman for going to auctions I ever see. I pledge you my word, she's filled my house with the wildest mess of truck you ever came across outside a museum of natural curiosities, and spent more money for old dilapidated wrecks, that wouldn't be allowed in the cellar of a poorhouse, than'd pay the national debt. It's a positive fact.

"Why, you know Bloomfields, that sold out the other day? Well, sir, she went to that sale, and just bid away as reckless as if she was buying diamonds. Absolutely came home with a wagon load of things—from German silver teapots without any lids or handles, the front posts of a bedstead and three slats, a couple of churns, and fourteen secondhand sunbonnets, and a lot more mournful refuse like that. Said she didn't intend to buy, but she bid on them to run them up to help Mrs. Bloomfield, and the auctioneer knocked them down to her quicker'n a wink. Said it was 'lot twenty-seven,' and she had to take it all. And she said she thought maybe she could cut up those sunbonnets into bibs for the twins, and use the teapots for preserves. She thought maybe she might make a pretty fair bedstead out of the posts by propping the other end up on a chair; and she said it was a lucky thing she was so forehanded as to get those churns, because sometime she might have a cow knocked down to her, and then she would be all ready for it. More'n likely she'll buy up some old steer, and fetch him home under the impression it's a cow. You can't count on her when she's got the auction fever on her.

"Why, when Paxtons had their sale, in May, she was around there, of course, and came home after dinner with the usual dismembered furniture; and when I said to her, 'Louisa, why under Heaven did you bid in that mud dredge and a sausage stuffer?' she said she thought the sausage stuffer would do for a cannon for the boys on the Fourth of July, and there was no telling whether Charley wouldn't want to be a civil engineer when he grew up, and maybe he'd get a contract for deepening the channel in the river, and then he'd rise up and bless the mother whose prudent foresight had bought a mud dredge for two dollars and saved it for him. I sold that scoop on Wednesday for old iron, for fifteen cents, and I'll bang the head off of Charley if he ever goes to dredging mud or playing cannon with the sausage stuffer. I won't have my boys carrying on like she does.

"Over there at Partridge's sale, I believe she'd 'a' bid on the whole concern if I hadn't come in while she was a-going it. And, as it was, she bought an aneroid barometer, eight dozen iron skewers, a sacking bottom, and four volumes of Eliza Cook's poems. Said she thought those poems were some kind of cookery books, or she wouldn't bid on them, and the barometer'd be valuable to tell us which was North. North, mind you! She thought a barometer was to tell the points of the compass. And yet they want to let women vote. I threw in those skewers along with the mud dredge, and she's used the sacking bottom twice to patch Charley's pants, and that's all the good we ever got out of that auction.

"But she don't care for utility. It's simply a mania for buying things. Why, we haven't a stove in the house since the furnaces were put in, and yet what does she do at Murphy's sale but bid on sixty-four feet and three elbows of the rustiest stovepipe you ever saw, and cart it home with four debilitated gingham umbrellas with half the ribs lame and only two handles in the lot; actually brought them home, and then had the face to argue with me that the umbrellas were a bargain, because, by putting on new covers and handles, and a few extra ribs, we could give them as Christmas presents to her aunts; and the stovepipe could be put around the peach trees to keep the cows off. How in thunder she was ever going to get it around a peach tree never crossed her mind. Just as impracticable as a baby!

"I know when Bailey had the auction at his insurance office she was there, of course, and bidding away at everything. So, sure enough, what did she come booming home with that afternoon but Bailey's poll-parrot, a circular saw, an accordion that had the bowels out, so it wouldn't play, and eight boxes of envelopes with directions printed in the upper corner, 'A. O. Murchison, Cincinnati. It amused me. She wanted to use that circular saw as a dinner gong, but it was cracked, and now she uses it as a griddle for muffins. That poll-parrot Bailey had taught to swear, so that I was afraid it'd demoralize the twins, so I don't mind telling you in confidence that I killed it by putting bug poison in a water cracker; and when I growled about those envelopes she began to cry, and asked me how I knew Charley wouldn't fall in love with some girl in Cincinnati named A. O. Murchison, and want to write to her frequently, and then those envelopes would come into play. I think she was rather in favor of shipping Charley off to Ohio to hunt up some girl of that name, so's he really could fall in love with her and utilize those envelopes. But she abandoned the idea finally. Oh, she's phenomenal.

"Now I see there's an auction advertised for Friday at Peters'; and Peters has a pyramid of old tomato cans piled up in his back yard. Now, you see, if that woman don't bid on those cans till she runs them up to a dollar apiece, and then come lugging them around to our house with some extraordinary idea about loading them up with gunpowder and selling them to the Government during the next war as bombshells. If she does—if she buys those cans, mind you, I'm going to resign. I'm going to quit before I'm bankrupt. I'm a good-natured man, but no woman shall bring home three hunderd tomato cans to my house and retain a claim upon my affection."

Irritability and Bad Temper.

Between the irritable and bad-tempered person there exists a difference usually lost sight of, because they are equally unpleasant persons to live with while the mood is on. Irritability usually proceeds from disordered nerves, and is frequently more of a malady than a fault. On the nervous man noises inflict an agony undreamed of by one with nerves of steel. It appears pure affectation and silliness to some that others should be worked into a state of almost maddening nerve soreness by the grating of cinders, the crunching of apples, the irregular munching of sweets, the quavering creak of door hinges, the monotonous squeak of boots—or, worse still, of one boot—the loud, battering, insensate, metallic, unmodulated clang of the street organ. We know the triviality of these things, and that it would be only reasonable to take as little notice of them as of the wind or rain. Sometimes it can be done. We do not hear them, or we are indifferent to them; but at other times, when the nerves are in a state of tension that instantly vibrates into irritability, these well-understood noises, however much we may brace ourselves against them, are an excruciation.

There are various forms of this irritability which comes from overwrought nerves, and all are hard to encounter. Impatience is one of the most unreasonable and absurd, as you will recollect if you have observed a fidgety and irresponsible man "exploding" on a railway platform because the train is late. His senseless fuming is no more practical than railing against fate, and its only tolerable feature is that it amuses the spectators; but the same impatience used to lacerate friends or annoy dependents is one of the commonest causes of misunderstanding and unhappiness.

Then there is the irritability that arises from cross-purposes, and attempts to do too many things at once. Once let nerve sensitiveness be set up by business worry, and the faintest shade of feeling may be seized as a cause of excitability, especially, alas! with those whose relationship is most delicate and sensitive. Happy is the man who has a friend who will warn him in good time if he is degenerating into an irritability which is a danger and a nuisance, before his own peace and the peace of the family of which he is a member are totally destroyed. The malady can be cured if taken in time. Fresh air, long sleep, nourishing food, quiet talk, an easy-going withdrawl from the business that has slowly brought debility to us—these are the remedies. "But," objects the sufferer, "I cannot take this cure and fill my place in the world." Then live a less ambitious life, and live longer!

Her Usual Line of Talk.

A certain Louisville social leader, whom we will call Mrs. Fayette County, to avoid identifying her, was told by her husband over the telepnone that he would bring a number of guests home to dinner. The party was altogether unexpected and in all the house, which has become noted for the generous and sumptuous dinners spread in it, there was not enough food.

Mrs. County got busy at once and instructed her cook to order certain supplies while she planned the rest of the dinner. A little later Mrs. County happened in the room where the telephone was and was horrified to hear her cook talking ferociously into the telephone, something as follows:

"An' Ah want six dozen sof' shell crabs an' ef yo' doan git 'em up here mighty quick Ah'll skin every one of yo', yo' low down —— ——. 'Who is dis?' Dis is Mrs. Fayette County, dat's who dis is, and Ah means ev'ry word Ah say.' "

"Mandy," cried the mistress, "what do you mean? You must not."

"Law'sy," returned the cook, "that's all right, Miss Fay, Ah talks to 'em like dat for yo' all de time."

* * *

Speaking of Poet Watson, however, there are other Watsons that have their little peculiarities. Ever hear of Tom?

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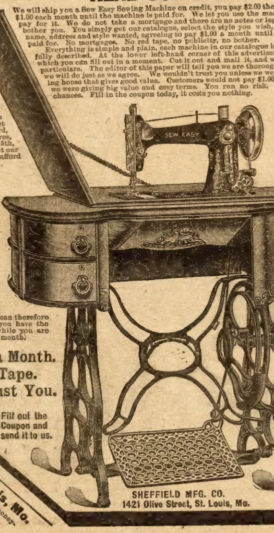

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3

THE ORIGIN OF POPULAR NAMES

BY WILLIAM BANDERMAN.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT, before setting out on his career of conquest in the East, sent word to the Jews to erect a monument in his honor. Some years later, on returning, he was astonished and angered to find that no monument had been raised to him by those people. He summoned the high priest, who came with many children in his train. The King asked, sternly, if his order had been forgotten. "O King," replied the high priest, "it is contrary to our religion to make an image or a statue. But behold!" Turning, he asked a boy who stood near, "What is your name?" "Alexander," replied the boy. Other boys on being asked their names replied in turn, "Alexander." "You see, O King," exclaimed the high priest at last, "we have fulfilled your command by naming every son of our race Alexander who has been born since your command was given. That name will go down from generation to generation and such living monuments will be far more enduring than a monument of stone."

The high priest spoke truly. If Alexander has no such significant memorials as has Caesar in the titles "kaiser" and "czar," his is still a favorite name for princes as well as for common folk of many nations, from the Persian Iskander to the Scottish Saunders.

But, a low-spirited writer assures us, "a man nowadays has no Christian name, properly so called. Society has ruled that our sons and brothers shall be baptized with the surnames of their maternal grandfathers or some other potential relative; so that in the course of a few generations Tom, Dick and Harry, and equally Cyril and Algernon, will be almost obsolete. This detestable and idiotic custom, I am grieved to see, is creeping insidiously into the nomenclature of our women—not yet, to be sure, as first names, but in too many instances as subsidiary titles not to cause the gravest apprehension that the days of Alice and Blanche and Mary and Ellen are numbered." This is, of course, an exaggeration. At the same time, it is an exaggeration based on solemn fact. Is it surprising, however, that Laura Patricia Jewell, let us say, having become Mrs. Wilkins Biggins, should call her eldest son Jewell Biggins in memory of the name she herself has lost?

Still, the excellent Mrs. Biggins cannot plead that real Christian names are scarce. They have been gathered up from near and far as time went by. In earlier centuries they were a little hard to find in abundance, it seems, where large families were to be provided for. A few hundred years ago in England lived a certain William Richardson and his wife Christina. The parish records show that they had eighteen children, of whom two were named John, two William, two Christina and three Janet. The scarcity which embarrassed this worthy couple exists no longer.

Some years ago a tabulation of the names of 100,000 English men and women was made. The twenty-five Christian names that were most common among them are as follows, the relative popularity of each being shown by the order in which they stand: Mary, William, John, Elizabeth, Thomas, George, Sarah, James, Charles, Henry, Alice, Joseph, Ann, Jane, Ellen, Emily, Frederick, Annie, Margaret, Emma, Eliza, Robert, Arthur, Alfred, Edward. Twelve of these are women's names and thirteen are men's names. Two-thirds of the 100,000 persons bore one or the other of the twenty-five, the rest dividing among them names in great variety.

What has made these particular names so popular? None of them save Alfred and Edward were English names at the time of the Norman conquest. Ellen, which is the same as Helen, Elaine and Eleanor, was common in Wales at a very early day and went to England in the time of the plantagenets. Arthur, too, is of Celtic origin. Mary, John and its feminine of Jane, Thomas, Sarah, James and Joseph doubtless owe their popularity largely to their scriptural associations.

Anglo-Saxon names had commonly begun with words meaning royal, fortunate or beloved. The Edgars and Ethelberts were comparatively little known after the followers of William the Conqueror invaded England, with their Teutonic names of Richard, Robert, Henry and the rest. These were originally high German designations. The Frankish conquerors of Gaul took them to France. Though the invaders adopted the language of the people among whom they lived and over whom they ruled they gave their own names to these Romanized Celts So today the French call themselves Charles or Louis, after the Karls and Ludwigs who came from beyond the Rhine so many hundreds of years ago. The northmen in their turn, when they carved out for themselves a duchy on the shores of France, took these Teutonic names. As soon as the Norman dynasty was established in England the English people adopted the names of Walter, William, Henry Richard and the rest, which up to that time had been foreign to them.

Elizabeth, though of scriptural origin, owes its popularity to Queen Elizabeth. Thomas was not known in England before the Norman conquest. It became a common name through reverence for the memory of Thomas a Becket. George, the name of four kings of England and of England's patron saint, naturally has become common. Sarah came into prominence after the reformation because of its old testament associations. James, though common in the middle ages, leaped into popularity when James I. came to the throne of England. After the downfall of the Stuarts the son of a Jacobite was usually called either James or Charles. The latter name owes its popularity to the kings of the house of Stuart who bore it. Henry, borne by more kings of England than any other, naturally became common. Alice is of Norman origin and was originally a man's name, Eliza being its proper feminine form. It gets its popularity from various sources.

Of Anne and Annie Miss Yonge said: "It was from Prague, of which St. Anne had been the patron saint, that the Bohemian princess, Anne of Luxemburg, brought it to England and gave it to her name-child, Anne Mortimer, by whom it was carried to the house of York, then to the Howards, from them to Anne Boleyn, and thereby became almost a party word in England."

Queen Anne's reign added to its popularity. Jane became popular in England in the Tudor period, having been borne by various noble ladies of that time. Emily is from the old Teuton Embla, although the Latin Emilia has joined forces with it. The daughter of King George II, who bore the name, though after the fashion of that day she called herself Amelia, did much for its popularity. Frederick, prominent in the British royal family in the eighteenth century, spread to the masses at that time. As one writer says of the coming to England of the House of Hanover: "The loyalty of our great-grandfathers flooded the country at once with Georges, Fredericks, Charlottes and Sophias. Every young man of quality was an Ernest, an Augustus, an Adolphus or a Lewis; every girl was an Augusta, a Louisa, a Caroline or a Matilda."

Margaret's popularity began in England with King Henry III.'s daughter, who bore that name. Emma is a Norman name and came from the old Franks. Its masculine form, Emmo, from the god Ymir of northern mythology, is obsolete. Robert dates from the Norman conquest, it having been borne by the eldest son of William the Conqueror. Arthur, though borne by various unfortunate English princes and by the legendary Welsh hero-king, was made popular in England by Arthur, Duke of Wellington. Alfred and Edward were names that belonged in the English tongue before the conquest and have been in favor longest of all.

From these examples it appears that, as one writer has said, "the principle of mere repetition is that upon which our personal nomenclature mainly depends. If the father's name be William, it is likely that the name of the first born will be William also. When more children appear, the chances are that their names will be borrowed from other relatives.

MAISIE'S ADVENTURE.

When they first met it was a blustering day. Her fair hair, falling in happy confusion over the pretty girlish face, refused to be kept in bounds by hairpin or veil; but this only made more picturesque the slight form of the girl as she walked along the cliffs gazing with dreamy eyes on the sea beyond.

When she started out on her morning walk the day seemed in keeping with her mood—one of angry impatience, but the buffeting elements were fast removing even the feeling of depression that had followed, and a spirit of petulant resignation was creeping over her as she exclaimed:

"Oh, well, I don't care! There are as good fish in the sea, they say, as ever came out of it!"

She was but seventeen—sweet seventeen, and one's first disappointment in love is soon forgotten.

Thinking herself alone, she heaved a great sigh of relief. "Heigh-ho!" she sang out, "heigh-ho!"

After a few minutes' pause, she stopped in her walk, and, looking out on the white and rolling billows, began singing again. This time it was a fragment of a song:

"'Sigh no more, ladies,
Sigh no more'
Men were deceivers ev——'"

She stopped abruptly, fancying she heard a footstep behind her.

Looking hastily round, she encountered the earnest gaze of a pair of dark-brown eyes—lustrous and full of expression—the kind of eyes that possess such fascination for very young people. She turned quickly away in some confusion.

The man passed on, seemingly as if nothing had happened. But something had indeed happened. As the blue eyes and the brown ones met, little Cupid shot an arrow right into the heart of the man.

"Did he hear? I wonder," mused Maisie. "Oh, dear! Oh, dear, I thought I was quite alone!"

She turned homeward, and for a moment felt the old despondency coming back. But somehow a pair of dark-brown eyes could not be forgotten. The remembrance of them came ever and anon before her, chasing away the old thoughts, and bringing new ones.

Once again—but glancing round this time to assure herself that she was quite alone—rang out the old refrain:

"Heigh-ho! Heigh-ho!" followed by the mysterious words, "Who knows?"

Suddenly she was startled out of all composure on hearing her own words come back to her. But whence? Was it an echo? Was it the wind? These thoughts she did not utter aloud, fearing she knew not what. Standing rooted to the spot—she was again startled by the question, repeated in a distinctly masculine voice:

"Who knows?"

She thought she recognized the voice, too—but whose was it? She turned, and there close beside her, looking over a hammock, was the face of her Cousin Tom.

"Oh, Tom, how you did frighten me! What do you mean, you naughty boy?"

"Oh, don't be so hard on a fellow, Maisie. I couldn't resist the temptation. I saw you coming, and knowing your habit of talking to yourself, I hid behind this grassy knoll—that's what you'd call it, isn't it?"

Maisie pouted prettily. She was not going to forgive him so readily.

"Come, Maisie, say you forgive me. You know you do—in your heart. That's to say, if you have one."

"Have one? No, Tom, I haven't, and you know it, so what's the use of appealing to me through that?"

"Well, I used to think you had."

"Used to, indeed! What next?"

"Oh, I say, Maisie, I have such a bully fellow to introduce to you—tall, handsome, dark, with brown eyes—just the kind you dote on. Rich—lots of money."

"Don't tease, Tom!"

"True, Maisie, true as as—as—anything, really! Now you forgive me, old girl?"

"I don't know," said Maisie reluctantly. "I'll see." The vision of brown eyes had returned.

"I say, by Jove, Maisie! What luck! There he is!"

Maisie looked up quickly, and saw coming toward them the man of her morning's adventure.

"Oh, I say, Tom, don't—don't for heaven's sake introduce me. I'll tell you all, only don't—please," she added pleadingly.

But it was too late. The man stopped of his own accord.

"Do introduce me to my little lady cousin, Tom, like the good fellow you are," said he.

"Cousin?" gasped Maisie.

"Cousin!" repeated the stranger.

"Cousin!" echoed Tom, laughing. "Yes, Maisie, this is your cousin, and my cousin—Robert Bellingham. You've heard of him, although you were just a baby when he went West. But I must leave you to make each other's acquaintance, as I have an engagement. Ta-ta, Maisie. Robert will look after you."

As he bounded away, leaving them alone, Maisie was ready to burst into tears of vexation. But this only made her look the prettier in the eyes of Robert Bellingham.

"Did I startle you today?" he asked, laughing. "I'm very sorry, as much on my own account as on yours—for I stopped your singing. Won't you finish your song now?"

She blushed still deeper—a blush that gave an added radiance to her cheeks and a sweeter expression to the downcast eyes.

"Won't you?" he added, in a tone that was becoming dangerous.

Gaining confidence, she looked up into his face and asked:

"Did you hear what I was singing?"

"Yes and I would like to hear it again."

Then, as he looked into her beautiful childish face, he began to laugh, singing:

"'Sigh no more, ladies,
Sigh no more!
Men were deceivers ev——'"

He stopped abruptly as Maisie had done before. Then, after a moment's pause:

"Heigh-ho!" sang Robert, and

"Heigh-ho!" echoed Maisie, laughing, "So you heard it all?"

"All," he said.

There was another moment's pause, while each looked into the other's eyes; then they turned away again, laughing quietly, happily.

And then? Well, then the hours and moments flew rapidly past, borne on the wings of love, until one lovely July day these two lovers resolved to sing "Heigh-ho" together to the end of their lives.

Expert Players.

The following conversation was overheard by a waiter at a ladies' club. The man was able to use his knowledge of shorthand to take notes, having once been a reporter.

"Jane," said Maria, "it is your lead."

"Why, no," answered Jane. "It is Ida's."

"No," spoke up Ida, "it is not my lead. Susan dealt the cards."

"Why, then it must be my lead," said Maria. "What's trumps?"

"Hearts!" shouted three young voices in unison.

"Well, there is my lead," said Maria, playing the deuce of clubs.

"But you must lead a trump card, my dear!" cried Jane.

"Yes, and lead the biggest trump you have in your hand," put in Ida, Jane's partner.

"Well, then here is the queen of hearts," said Maria.

"Oh, you mean thing, you!" exclaimed Jane. "That takes my king."

"But I will take the trick, for I have the ace," said Ida.

"But," remarked Susan, "that is the ace of diamonds."

"So it is," said Ida. "Well, here is the four of hearts."

"I've got the ace of hearts," purred Susan. "Does that take the trick?"

"Of course it does," answered Jane.

"No, it doesn't," said Ida. "A court card always takes another card."

"Oh, let's stop playing!" cried Maria wearily. "It's no fun when there are no men to tell you how to play."

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CORNER

Rifle and Cabin;

Or, Carl and Roger in the Wilderness

By T. C. Harbaugh

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CHAPTER IV.

CARL HAS ADVENTURES.

IT WAS with feelings of satisfaction that the boys in the cabin on the banks of Crow Wing River beheld Blue Bird, Indian girl, emerge from the trance which admirably counterfeited death.

When she has sufficiently recovered she told her story, which was listened to with breathless interest.

Blue Bird had been roaming in the forest when she was set upon by a lot of rascals and chased for her life some distance. She recognized the leader of the party as Captain Selkirk, the head of the Dirty Dozen, and this lent speed to the girl's flight.

That was why she fell exhausted at the door of the young trappers' cabin with the fierce men of the Northern forest almost at her heels. For some reason they had drawn off after seeing her within reach of succor, and thus she was enabled to save herself by her call for help.

It was decided that Blue Bird should remain in the cabin till all danger was passed, but when day came Jackstraw took his departure, saying that he would find his way to the settlement where he would tell the story of the night's adventures.

"The traps must not suffer," said Carl Main to his companion. "I confidently expect to find some excellent game in them and if you will remain and keep house with Blue Bird, Roger, I will visit the trap-line."

Roger agreed to this arrangement, though he feared for Carl's safety after the adventures of the night, and after admonishing his chum to exercise the greatest care, he saw him depart.

It was five miles to the nearest trap as the crow flies, but Carl, a little fearful of discovery, took a roundabout way through the woods and at last reached his destination.

To his joy the first trap yielded a fine mink, and the next one gave him a large otter, so that he was proud of the catch.

With his eyes about him, the young trapper went down the line of traps, listening to all the forest sounds that grated on his ears. The night's catch was all he could have wished for.

With the yield across his shoulders, Carl turned his face toward the cabin.

All at once he halted at the foot of a tree, for something had dropped at his feet. To his astonishment he noticed that a half-eaten bird lay on the ground. Casting his gaze up into the branches of the tree he saw what had caused the fall of the bird. In the forks crouched one of the largest panthers he had ever seen.

In an instant the boy's game was thrown to the ground and the ready rifle was gripped in his hands.

The gleaming eyes of the ferocious beast seemed sparks of fire, and Carl, for a moment, stood looking into them.

Suddenly he threw the weapon to his shoulder and took deliberate aim.

With a cry, that echoed far and wide, the huge beast sprang from the tree and, tumbling over the boy hunter's head, measured his length on the ground.

The ball had struck the panther between the eyes and it was quite dead.

"That's one pelt I never bargained for," ejaculated Carl, "but all is fish that comes into the net here."

He stood over the panther wondering how he would transport it home, but at last he decided to remove the pelt and add it to his burden.

Placing his rifle against the tree he proceeded to his self-alloted task.

When he had finished the skinning of the panther he happened to glance at the tree, and the next moment was upon his feet with a blanched face.

The gun was gone!

Thinking that perhaps it had fallen among the leaves he moved around the tree, but the weapon was not in sight.

"What mystery is this?" exclaimed the puzzled boy. "I set the rifle against the tree and——"

He did not finish the sentence, for with a startling cry he recoiled, for the mystery was solved.

A man had stepped from behind an adjacent tree and was holding the missing rifle in his hands.

There was a grin on the dark face of the stranger, and his eyes scintillated in a manner which greatly puzzled the boy trapper.

"You want your gun, I s'pose?" said the man, as he came forward, at the same time extending Carl's weapon. "It tells you that one must keep an eye on his belongings in these parts, eh?"

Carl blushed.

"I did not expect to have my gun taken," he said. "Such an accident was far from my thoughts"

"No doubt," was the reply. "Where do hail from?"

"My chum and I have been trapping in these parts. We have a shack to the north."

"Along Crow Wing River?"

"Yes."

Carl wondered to himself why he answered the man, whose motives might not be of the purest, but somehow or other he seemed to be hypnotized by the singular eyes that shone in the man's head.

"Let's sit down on this log and talk matters over," said the man, suddenly changing his tones. "You appear to be a knowing boy. Maybe you can give me some information."

"We haven't been in these parts very long," said Carl. "I fear you must go to older settlers for information."

"I find it sometimes where I do not look for it," smiled the other. "I'm going to be fair with you, boy. My name is Wilhide—Aaron Wilhide, if you please. I came from the far East and my mission in the wilds of Minnesota is an important one."

Carl did not reply, but waited for the man to proceed, which he presently did.

"I suppose you never heard of one Israel Potts?" he suddenly asked.

The question nearly took Carl's breath.

"Indeed I have, sir!" exclaimed the boy trapper. "The name is quite a familiar one to me."

"Where in the name of goodness are you from?" cried Aaron Wilhide

Carl told him.

"Then you do know something of the Potts Mystery, as it is still called," resumed the man. "Well, my boy, the ten thousand dollars reward offered for the apprehension of Israel Potts by the United States Government still holds good. That's why I'm out here."

"You must be a Government officer?"

"I am. I obey the commands of the chief of the Secret Service of the United States. I cannot go into details of the clew which has brought me into these parts. It may be a false one after all. When old Potts skedaddled after defrauding the Government in the paper contract he was lost to view. A greater rascal never lived. He not only robbed the Government but he left the employes of the mills in poverty. They would string him up if they could. Of course, you haven't come in contact with Israel Potts in these woods?"

Carl said nothing. He recalled the adventures of the past few hours, the visit of Jehu Potts, the warning to leave, written on certain water-marked paper and the resemblance of Captain Selkirk's face to a certain other one.

All this passed through his mind with the rapidity of lightning.

"I'm glad I met you, boy," said Aaron Wilhide. "If you should happen to pick up any clew to the fugitive and can get word to one Dan Remsberg, which is my name for the present, at Rosebud, the reward will be fairly divided."

With this the secret service man rose and bade Carl good day.

He vanished in the forest, going in a direction not to be taken by the boy on his way home.

"Perhaps I had better have told him what I suspect," thought Carl as he trudged along with his burden of pelts. "At first he looked like one of the Dirty Dozen, but I've no doubt he was what he claims to be. So the old reward still holds good," and what the boy thought as he hurried on we will not record.

When he reached the cabin by the river and had thrown his pelts upon the floor he turned upon Roger.

"Where's the Sioux girl?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, she took a notion to go away," was the reply. "She's a queer one."

"Gave you the slip, eh?"

"Not exactly. She went off in full view and with a fair warning. Did you shoot just over the hill to the right?"

"I didn't come in that way," answered Carl.

"But you heard the report?"

"No; perhaps the wind was not blowing right for that."

"It was a strange-sounding shot," pursued Roger. "I did not investigate, but now that you are back I believe I will."

The young trapper picked up his rifle and left the cabin.

In a few moments he came running back, his eyes bulging and his face quite pale.

"There's a dead man just over the little rise!" he cried as he halted in the cabin door. "It's a man I never saw before."

Carl seized his weapon, and in a moment was at Roger's side.

"A dead man?" he exclaimed. "Things are getting interesting hereabouts."

The young hunters ran toward the rise spoken of by Roger, and the youth said, as he pointed forward:

"Yonder he lies, where the bushes are!"

Carl ran on and the next moment had halted at the designated spot.

"Why, it's Aaron Wilhide!"

"Who's he?" asked Roger.

"I'll tell you later on," was the reply. "Dead? No, he's not dead yet."

At this juncture the form on the ground moved slightly and the man opened his eyes.

"Where in the world am I?" he gasped. "Ah, yes. I remember. You're the boy I met awhile ago with the pelts?" and his gaze was fixed on Carl. "You've got shooting Indians in these parts."

"I can't say as to that. The Sioux village is not many miles from here."

"Well, all I can say I was suddenly confronted by an Indian, and the moment he set eyes on me he covered me with his gun and let drive."

"So far as I know the Sioux are peaceably disposed just now."

"That one isn't," grinned Aaron Wilhide as he felt the clotted blood alongside his left temple. "I'm all right now, I guess. It was a close call. Hereafter I'll be on the lookout for redskins."

"Are you sure it was an Indian?" queried Carl.

"Well, he was dressed like one, anyway. Queer he didn't attempt to finish his work by robbery. An Indian? Who else could it have been?"

To this Carl made no reply, and the next moment they separated from Wilhide and retraced their steps to the lone cabin.

CHAPTER V.

A FAMOUS BEAR FIGHT.

"We're on dangerous ground," remarked Roger when they found themselves once more in the solitude of the little cabin. "I am convinced from the adventures of the last few hours that the man Wilhide was not shot by an Indian."

"By whom, then?" asked Carl.

"That is for the future to bring out," was the reply. "Had his enemy been a Sioux he would have been robbed, if not scalped. No, the Government sleuth was shot by one who wanted him out of the way, and a white man at that."

To this Carl made no response, but seemed to fall into a train of deep thought.

"I would like to know more about that strange being who called himself Jackstraw," said Roger, continuing as he watched his friend taking care of the fruits

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of the morning's visit to the trap-line. "He referred to himself as a waif of the forest, but he seems to have incurred the enmity of Captain Selkirk and his gang."

"Captain Selkirk seems to be a real Ishmaelite," smiled Carl, looking up. "His hand is against every man and every man's hand against him. But there is the watermarked paper upon which the notice to leave was traced. Roger, can it be that Captain Selkirk is Israel Potts, whom the Government wants so badly?"

"It seems almost impossible, yet——"

The young trapper paused and passed his hand across his forehead.

"It seems a dream to me," he said at last. "This man Potts was a villain of villains. He was trusted by thousands, yet he betrayed their trust and brought more than one worthy person to poverty."

"Of such material outlaws are made," said Carl. "Aaron Wilhide must have had some clew to the man's whereabouts else he would not have come into this region. It's a mystery. Our first visitor, who called himself Jehu Potts, spoke of Israel as his uncle——"

"So he did. If Mr. Potts ever turns up again we will ask him about his uncle."

As if in direct answer to Roger's words a knock sounded on the door, and when it was opened the man whose name had just been mentioned almost fell into the room.

It was Jehu Potts himself.

"Howdy!" he exclaimed, as he tumbled forward, and the next moment fell on the floor. "Back again, see? Didn't expect to turn up so soon, but you can't tell what's going to happen in this neck o' the woods. I've had a time."

Both boys uttered exclamations of astonishment as the man threw out one leg and revealed a torn trouser, which looked as if it had been gashed from hip to ankle with a knife.

"Pretty narrow shave, don't you think?" he grinned, looking at the boys. "Ran across Old Ephraim out there in the woods."

"You must have had a tussle with him," said Carl.

"Didn't I, though? We had it nip and tuck for twenty minutes. Now I was on top and now the b'ar had the best o' the scrimmage."

"How did it end?"

"End? I hardly know. You see when I came to, the b'ar was gone."

"Oh, you didn't kill him, them?"

"Can't say that I did?" was the reply. "Why, that brute must weigh two thousand pounds."

"That's a pretty big bear, Mr. Potts."

"He was a corker an' no mistake," asseverated Potts, who was determined not to fall a single pound. "I've seen big b'ars in my time, but that one takes the premium card."

"How did you come to get into such close quarters with him?" queried Carl Main.

"I happened to be sitting on a log a-takin' an inventory of my personal effects when all at once a pair o' arms was put round my neck an' I sprang up with a yell that would have done credit to a Sioux Injun. When I turned round to see who was makin' himself so tarnal familiar, what did I see but that b'ar a-standin' on his hind feet lookin' me right in the face?"

"Where was your rifle, Mr. Potts?"

"Why, don't you know the brute had actually stolen it before he hugged me!" cried Potts. "B'ars are awful cute."

"That one must have been," remarked Roger, who could hardly suppress a smile.

"Yes, he was. For some time he grinned at me like a fool, an' then lurched forward. I saw that it was to be a tussle for keeps, so I did my best from the start. I tried to get the best hold, but the old rascal twisted about so cunningly that I was balked an' we went down like two wrestlers."

"You must have had a struggle."

"Thar was never one like it in this or any other kentry," ejaculated Jehu Potts. "I guess we must have rolled over an acre of ground. I tried every known artifice to get the best o' that b'ar, but he was up to snuff, as if he had been in the prize ring. Once I got my fingers in his eyes, but he got 'em out and I had to shift my tactics. That was the time he gave me that rip along the leg an' split my pants. I tell you that riled me more than anything else durin' the whole fight. I lost my knife early in the game, else I would have finished that b'ar in less than no time."

"But tell us how you came to get off with your life?" asked Carl.

"Well, it was a miracle. In a last desperate effort I rammed my fist down that b'ar's throat and was tearin' at some of his interior apparatus when he showed signs of flummixin'. It made him so sick that he just concluded that he had tackled the wrong individual, an' the first thing I knew I was holdin' the battle ground all alone. That b'ar, with his tail between his legs, was gettin' away from the spot as fast as possible."

"You seemed exhausted when you reached us?" slyly remarked Roger, with a glance at Carl.

"I was nearly gone. You see I didn't know when the old chap would take a notion to come at me again, an' I concluded to get away. I don't think there was ever just such a fight with a b'ar," and with this Mr. Potts lapsed into silence.

"My tussle made me hungry," he said after a long pause. "You don't happen to have anything refreshing in the cabin?"

Carl went to the little cupboard and placed some eatables before the bear fighter.

"Mr. Potts," said he as the man fell to with great gusto, "upon your former visit you spoke of your Uncle Israel."

"Did I mention him?"

"Yes."

"Come to think of it, I b'lieve I did. Well, what about him?"

"When did you see him last?"

"Oh, it's been years ago."

"Five years?"

"Yes, more than that."

"What was he doing when you saw him last?"

"He was makin' paper in the East."

"And quite well-to-do, wasn't he?"

"He was reputed rich."

"Did he ever get into trouble?"

"My uncle? Come, now, what makes you ask me such questions?" cried Potts as he nearly dropped the bone he had been gnawing.

"Just from idle curiosity," smiled Carl.

"Well, I guess I'll be goin'," suddenly exclaimed Potts. "I hope I won't have to repeat that fight with the b'ar."

He rose hastily and walked toward the door, but soon discovered that Roger had braced himself firmly against it.

"What do you mean?" flashed Jehu Potts.

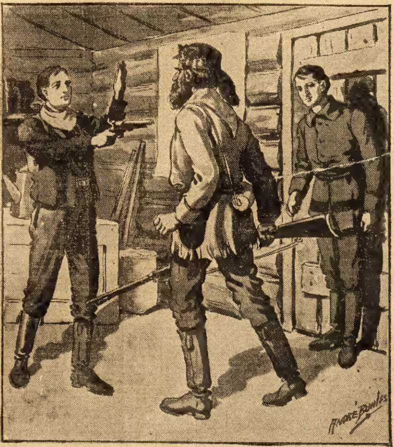
"Don't be in such a hurry," said Roger, coolly. "You haven't finished your meal."

"I had enough. Stand aside an' let me out".

"Not just yet, Mr. Potts," resumed Roger, who was backed up by a glance from Carl. "We happen to be a little interested in your uncle, Israel Potts."

"You are?"

"Yes. Isn't he the same Potts who had a large contract with the Government to make its paper?"



"Not so fast," put in Carl.

"No, sir, not that Israel Potts!" cried Potts as his face blanched. "It was another man, sir."

"Didn't your uncle run the Epluribus Mills?"

"Never heard o' them. Let me out, sir!"

The next moment the man Potts snatched up his rifle and was holding it poised over his head. His eyes glittered like a madman's and his body trembled from head to foot.

"I'll brain you if you don't open that door!" he almost yelled to Roger.

"Not so fast," put in Carl, who had jerked a revolver from a shelf and was holding it menacingly in his hand. "Don't tear yourself away, Mr. Potts."

The man dropped the rifle at sight of the boy with the other weapon.

"Your uncle is the man who ran the Epluribus Mills and you know it."

"Well, what of it?" cried Potts.

"It may mean a good deal. Where is he now?"

"Oh, he's dead."

"When did he die?"

"Three years ago."

"Where?"

"He was found dead in Chicago."

"You're quite sure of this?"

"I am. Now, sir, let me out."

Carl nodded to Roger, who stepped from the door.

Jehu Potts was at the portal in a single bound. He jerked the door open with an oath.

"Look out for the bear that weighs two thousand pounds!" called out Carl between outbursts of laughter.

"To Halifax with the b'ar!" came back from the man outside. "I hope Captain Selkirk will find you young chaps. I'll see that he does."

"Just as you please," said Roger. "One moment, Mr. Potts."

The man halted and turned toward the cabin.

"What is it?" he growled.

"Please don't bother us any more. We've heard of Baron Munchausen before. As for your uncle, he is as alive as yourself and you know it."

"It's false," shouted Potts, shaking his fist at the boys in the doorway. "He's as dead as a mackerel. Good-by. When I see you again it'll be under different circumstances."

With this Jehu Potts turned and walked rapidly through the woods toward the river.

"The man knows," said Roger to his chum. "Mr. Wilhide is on the right trail. Israel Potts is in this region."

"And I believe that Captain Selkirk and the man Uncle Sam wants are one and the same person."

CHAPTER VI.
THE SHOOTING MATCH.

Quite early the following day a wagon, drawn by two poor horses, drew up in front of the cabin near the river, and Carl and Roger gazed with some interest upon the occupants of the vehicle.

"Ain't you going?" asked the man, who was driving, as he took a long-stemmed pipe from his mouth.

"Going where?" asked both boys at once.

"To the shooting match over on the South Fork."

"We haven't heard of any such affair."

"Well, it's all the news up our way, isn't it, 'Mandy?" and the man turned to a good looking girl on the hind seat.

"It's a free match, too," continued the man. "It's open to the hull world."

"Better get in and go with us," chimed in a middle-aged woman, who looked as though she was the wife of the family. "'Tain't ten miles off, you know."

The two boys exchanged looks.

"It might prove a diversion," Roger said. "We've seen very few persons since we came into this region, and the shooting match might extend our acquaintance."

"We'll go," Carl answered the woman, "that is if you have room."

"Plenty of it," was the prompt reply. "One o' you kin sit with sis and t'other with me."

Responding heartily to these words the young heroes of the wilderness were soon ready. Their rifles were placed in the wagon and they had taken their seat with the frontier family.

"Our name is Shanks," said the woman in response to an inquiry. "We came out here from Indiana four years ago. Had pretty hard scrappin' the first year, but we're well off now. We own the team, have two cows and 'Mandy's got prospects."

The girl blushed and tried to hide her face in her apron.

"It's a fact, sis," said her mother. "He's been comin' off an' on for six months. Job ain't such a bad fellar after all. Pap don't like 'im kase he don't take to farm duds."

"What does he do?" asked Roger.

"He clerks in the postoffice at Rosebud. I guess he's about gone on sis——"

"Mother!" came out from beneath the folds of the apron. "Don't embarrass me."

The next mile was made in silence.

The boys were enjoying the ride, and Roger, thinking silence had been kept long enough, said:

"Who shoots at these matches?"

"The hull kentry does," responded old man Shanks. "The Injuns take a hand in it, too. They do some tall shooting."

"What are the prizes?"

"Ginerally game."

"Who won the last match?"

"A half crazy boy."

"What?"

"It's a fact. They call him Jackstraw.

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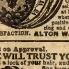

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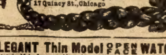

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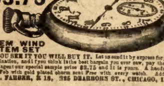

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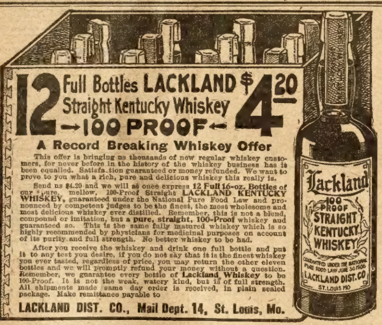
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Nobody knows anything about him, and they had a fuss over whether he should have the prize on account o' his condition."

"Did they finally decide in his favor?"

"Yes, an Indian took the boy's part and settled the matter."

Not long afterward the boys came in sight of a few houses at the edge of a forest, and Shanks told them that they were at Tumble-In, as the place was called.

A number of men were seen as they came nearer, and just over a rise more than one hunderd more were noticed. They had reached the scene of the shooting match.

When the Shanks outfit drew up on the ground Carl and Roger alighted, and the latter turned to assist Miss 'Mandy out. But his services were not needed, for with great agility the girl leaped over the wheel and alighted on the ground.

"She kin jump a fence an' never tech it," said Mrs. Shanks, admiringly, at which sis blushed again.

It was a motley crowd that had gathered at Tumble-In for the shooting match. There were men of all sizes and shades, from the white man to the dark-hued Indian.

Carl and Roger looked around to see if Jackstraw was present, but they failed to find him. Perhaps the last appearance of the forest waif had proved enough for him.

"Who have you brought to Tumble-In?" asked a tall, raw-boned man of Shanks, as he glanced at our young trappers.

"I r'arly don't know. I picked 'em up over on the Crow Wing. They've never shot before."

"They look like they could pull the trigger pretty well."

"They'll show you by an' by."

The boys soon found themselves the center of attraction, perhaps on account of their clean appearance. They were surrounded by a group of men, who plied them with questions.

"Look yonder," whispered Roger at Carl's side. "As I live, there is Blue Bird."

"Where?"

"In yon group. She's dressed pretty much like a boy, but it's the girl just the same."

Carl soon made out the lithe figure of the chief's daughter, and for a moment studied it with interest.

"Shoot number one," suddenly called out a strident voice, and a large man came forward and held out his hands. "It's a one hundred yard shoot, two best in three shots, five to shoot."

Silence followed this announcement.

"The lists ain't quite full for this shoot," continued the caller. "Only four have entered."

"Why don't you try it?" said the voice of Shanks, at Carl's ear.

"I would like to know who I am to shoot against," said the boy.

As if to answer him four men, armed with long-barreled rifles, stepped forward and glanced at the target which had been set up in the clear one hundred yards away.

They looked like marskmen, did these men, and the two boys were studying them when Shanks whispered:

"You'll have to shoot well to beat Sim Turner, the big man with red hair. He's the boss shot on Timber Creek, wins nearly all the matches and was the man who disputed Jackstraw's shot the last time."

"I don't like his looks," observed Roger.

"And nobody likes him," said Shanks. "They say he belongs to the Dirty Dozen, but no one dares throw it in his teeth."

The young trappers started at sound of the dreaded name.

"Then I'll shoot against Sim Turner," said Carl with determination, and he stepped over to where the champions stood.

He was looked over from head to foot as if he were undergoing military inspection, but he gave look for look and kept his head.

In the toss for shots Carl got the last one.

He watched the movements of the marksmen and notably those of Turner.

When his turn came he drew up leisurely and looked keenly over the barrel of his weapon.

It was a better shot than the boy expected to make, for he drove the ball within the inner circle and so near the bull's-eye that it had barely escaped. When the shot was announced Roger looked at Sim Turner and saw his lips close madly.

Three of the contestants dropped out, leaving Carl and the red-haired man, who had tied to shoot off the score.

"I had trouble with a boy the last time," Carl heard him growl to one of his companions. "A sneakin' Injun got him off, but I'll be hanged if I put up with such doin's today."

The rivalry between Carl and the giant drew the attention of the whole crowd.

Everybody came forward, and it was noticed that more than wonted excitement was visible in the Indians' eyes.

It was best two in three shots.

Sim Turned advanced boldly to the mark and raised his rifle. His dark cheek dropped to the stalk and his finger rested at the easy trigger.

He drove the ball to within a hair's breadth of the bull's-eye and lowered the gun with a look of confidence.

Carl came to the scratch with the coolness of a veteran.

At the report of his rifle all leaned forward and waited for the judgment of the scorer, who stood near the target.

The scorer held up his hand and then slowly lowered it.

"It's the bull's-eye!" said half a dozen voices.

Carl glanced proudly at Roger, who was watching Sim Turner, whose face seemed to have been shaded by a storm cloud.

"It's the meddlin' boy again," some heard him hiss.

Once more the man shot, but with no better result. Anger was making him nervous.

Through it all Carl kept his head. He knew that to lose, it would lose the match and when, by his deliberate coolness, he drove the missile for the second time into the bull's-eye, a cheer went up which seemed to whiten Turner's cheeks.

"Kill the boy!" he cried, glancing furiously at Carl, who had stepped to Roger's side.

"You will do nothing of the kind," said Roger as his hands got a firmer grip on his weapon. "The match was fair. Carl entered it because he had a right to. This is a free country——"

"Who are you?" interrupted the infuriated man, advancing toward Roger.

"Carl Main's companion, sir," was the reply as the bully was looked fairly in the eye.

"Clear the way!" almost shouted Turner, now maddened beyond endurance. "I won't be cheated out o' my prize by a kid!"

"You will have to submit to the decision of the judges," retorted Roger.

"I'll be hanged if I will!"

Before any one could restrain him he had leaped upon Carl like a tiger. The boy, taken unawares, was jerked from the ground and liftel in midair over the man's head.

The onslaught seemed to paralyze every one.

"I'll break every bone in his body!" roared Turner. "Get out of the way! I'm going to throw the young scamp half-way to the target!"

He rushed forward with Carl above his head. The next moment came the report of a rifle and Sim Turner, the giant, tottered back and sank to the ground as Carl fell from his grasp.

And ten yards away stood Jackstraw with a smoking rifle in his hands.

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this story of strange and wild boyhood adventures. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

O, Yes, He Knew.

A much traveled Philadelphian who in spite of wide experience, is not overstocked with brains, recently returned to this city. Among other amiable and harmless qualities he is noted as being a bluffer, and if question is put to him which he does not understand he will fake an answer.

An acquaintance of this man, who, while he has not traveled to the extent that his friend has, is intelligent and well read, met Mr. Blank and questioned him as to his trip.

"Have a good time, Blank, while you were away?"

"Good time? O, fine! Never had a better."

"What countries did you do?"

"Well, we went over Europe pretty thoroughly and then ran down into the orient."

"That must have been great," said the friend, eagerly. "I suppose you saw the Dardanelles when you were there?"

The other looked blank for a moment and then said: "The Dardanelles, good gracious, yes. Why, we grew so intimate that they spent most of their time at our hotel, and my wife says——

"That's a bad cough you have," Blank added suddenly, as his friend choked and motioned to a street car to stop, and left him abruptly.

Funston Is No Beauty.

Gen. Fred Funston, U. S. Army, dropped into town for a few hours yesterday and went up to call on his old friend, Paul Gaylord. The General told of a laughable experience he had on a train a few days ago. He was in the smoking compartment of the sleeper and became engaged in conversation with a Kansan from the rural districts. Gen. Funston did not introduce himself. After they had talked awhile on various subjects the Kansan said:

"Say, you look a good deal like Fred Funston. He's a General in the army now."

"Do you know Funston?" asked the General.

"I should say I do. He's from our State."

"I've seen Gen, Funston," said the army man, seriously. "I'm a little better looking than he is, I'm inclined to believe."

"Oh, Funston won't ever take no prize at any beauty show," said the Kansan, "but, just between me and you, mister, you won't neither."

The General changed the subject.— Denver Post.

Treating.

"Won't you step up an' jine us in a glass o' ginger pop, Si?" said Bill Granger, generously, to old Si Haysee at the crossroad store. "I just sold a six-weeks-old calf for $9, an' I don't mind being a little reckless. What you say to a ginger pop?"

"Much obleeged, I'm sure, Bill," said Si, "but the fact is ginger pop ruther goes to my head, an' I better let it alone."

"That so? Well, what do you say to a glas of sody? Like to have you jine me in something."

"Well, but sody sort o' strings my throat an' makes me sneeze. But if you're bound to stand treat you might git ginger pop fer the other boys an', if it's all the same to you, I'll take 5 cents' wuth o' ten penny nails. I come in to git a few fer a fence I got to fix, an' if you'd as soon I took the nails as a drink, I'm agreeable."

"Al right, all right, Si. Anything to keep the baby quiet, as the sayin' is. Here, Mr. Storekeeper, you do Si up 5 cents' wuth o' nails an' take it out of this quarter."—Puck

The Cradle of the Deep.

The British warship Dreadnought, on a recent visit to Malta, clogged her propeller, and a diver was sent below to clear it of some flotsam with which it had become entangled. He got down right enough, but he failed to return.

As it happened, the rest of the battleship's divers were ashore, and as no answer was received to the telephone and the lifeline signals sent from the deck, grave concern began to be felt by those on board the ironclad. The worst was feared, and the lieutenant in charge sent ashore an urgent message for one of the other divers. A man came, hurriedly got inside his diving suit, and was lowered beneath the waves, but only to return at once full of indignation. He said, "That fellow's been asleep!"

It was true. Having lunched not wisely, but too well, the first diver appears to have sat himself so comfortable on one of the blades of the Dreadnought's propeller that soon he fell asleep.

The Black Phantom.

(Continued from page five.)

"Yes, when it is necessary."

Wenona shook her head dubiously.

"That bad," she said, and asked no more questions concerning the scout who had seemed at first to interest her.

"Wenona, is it not a good time to go now, while the braves are all absent from the village?"

"Too near time to come back, we meet them in woods, both be prisoners then. No trust Wenona again, and no escape then. Wenona and white sister wait till all asleep, then creep away. Indians not know till morning. This lodge no guarded, Wenona guard this lodge. Indians not afraid Wenona will go now."

"But," persisted Bessie, "they will all go at midnight to attack the wagons. If we go then we will surely run into them."

"We wait another night till all asleep, then go."

"But then the movers will all have gone on, thinking we are dead, for they will not dare to linger longer in this vicinity, if they are not all murdered as it is. Oh, Wenona, dear girl! what shall we do? Tell me!"

"We go find hermit, Wenona's father, if white people move on."

Bessie became quiet for a few moments. She had thought of Ben again, and her thoughts followed him in his flight. If he could but reach the wagons he could make known to their friends the fact that she and Robert were in the hands of the Indians.

"Wenona," she said, "could you not manage to go to Robert now, while all the red men are gone, and tell him of our plans? Tell him also that you are white, and will go with me to my people."

The Indian girl arose without a word and went out and around to the rear of the tent, where she struck into the wood. After working her way around till she was directly back of the prisoner, she threw herself into the grass and approached as Ben had approached the lodge where Bessie was confined, flat on her stomach.

She did not raise her head above the grass when she neared the tree to which he was tied, but paused and uttered the word "Hist!" And when she was sure of his attention, she told him in whispers that the paleface girl had sent her, and delivered the message she had sent.

"If you could cut my bonds, girl, I could help you and Bessie to escape," Robert whispered back.

"Wenona can't do that, squaws would see; then me get no chance set white girl free. Paleface friends must do that."

Robert glanced toward the fire round which were gathered the Indian women, and agreed with the girl that it was too risky. They would soon discover his absence and the village would be in an uproar; the girls would be found missing, and would probably be recaptured. He must wait, as Wenona had said, till it was safe; for when he went it was likely he must make a dash for liberty. He would not be able to help the girls. He must trust to Wenona's cunning to get Bessie to camp. And Hal would surely come to him when he knew.

Robert did not know that the savages intended burning him at the stake, or that Big Wolf had claimed Bessie for his bride; for Wenona had thought best not to tell him the horrible details of their intentions toward their captives. But if he had known all this he would still have hoped for the best.

"Go back to Bessie, then, girl, if you cannot liberate me. Go back and comfort and shield her. And God grant we may all get out of the clutches of these fiends of the plains. We will take you with us, my girl, if you are white and want to go; and we will defend you as we do our own."

"Wenona all white." And with this the girl drew back until she was in deeper shade, and then arose to her feet and glided away like a shadow among shadows. A rustling of a leaf near by brought her to a standstill. Had she been discovered by the returning Indians? If one of them had discovered her visit to the prisoner, what would be her fate? She was about to move on when a tall form stepped out from the near by bushes and confronted her. She looked up and nearly fainted from fright, brave as her Indian training had made her. For before her stood Big Wolf, the most terrible Indian of the tribe.

"Big Wolf has seen," he said significantly, using the Indian tongue. "Big Wolf has returned in time to see all. Big Wolf will be a great chief some day."

Wenona answered in his own language, standing defiantly before him, and speaking scornfully:

"Big Wolf has seen little and guessed much. Does the great chief leave the war-path to return and spy upon a squaw?"

The Indian's hand went to his belt and grasped the helve of his tomahawk, his eyes darted fire.

"Wenona does not fear Big Wolf, who will one day be big chief by spying on women, while he leaves his brothers to do the work of war. Wenona despises Big Wolf. Go!"

The girl's figure was drawn up to its full height, and her manner was that of an outraged queen, as she pointed with one slender finger toward the lodges where the squaws were congregated, an insult in itself to him who disdained the insinuation that his place was among women.

Though the hand of the Indian fingered the hatchet, it was not drawn from his belt. He could have slain the defiant girl for her insults, but he dared not, for Wenona was the slave of the old chief, who was greatly respected by the tribe, as well as feared.

He had hated her always, because she had white blood in her veins. And his visit to Bessie had not been because he had really desired her for his squaw, but merely to tantalize and frighten her. If ever Big Wolf took a wife it would be some Indian maiden of his own tribe. Wenona knew his hatred for palefaces, and did not try to conciliate him. She was well aware that her words of scorn could not make him more her enemy than he had always been.

The chase was over, as she could see, and Big Wolf was the first to return, though not the first to give up the search for Ben.

With a grunt the outraged Indian strode away toward the council fire, where the old chief still remained in front of his lodge, attended by his squaws.

Wenona hastened to the tent where Bessie was waiting in fearful and heart-aching suspense.

"Oh, Wenona! did you see him? Did you see Robert?" she whispered eagerly.

"Hist!" answered the girl, as she bent over and removed the bonds she had loosened some time before to relieve Bessie of the discomfort they gave her. "Wenona saw him, told all you say. Big Wolf see everything, he go tell chief. We must hide in forest now, quick, before red men return. Me know a place to hide, Indians no find, don't think."

Bessie was on her feet in an instant. She employed the time of Wenona's absence in rubbing her benumbed limbs, in case they found a chance to escape that night; and she was now ready to flee. Their chances were as good if they attempted it now as they would ever be, now that the Indian girl was suspected of treason.

She was loath to leave her lover behind in the hands of the savages, but she knew Ben must have escaped, and would bring the aid she could not. She had faith that her friends would be able to accomplish something, and believed that the scout must be somewhere near.

The two girls took some dried venison and parched corn that Wenona had in her lodge, and arming themselves with knives, they stole out under the back of the tent, where Ben Sheldon had lain a short time previous, and unknown even to Wenona had conversed with Bessie. After creeping in the tall grass till they were in the shelter of the woods, they rose silently to their feet and glided away, Bessie following in the footsteps of her rescuer.

* * * * * * * * * * *

After Hazel King had galloped away from the side of the scout, that worthy brought himself back to earth with a start. He left off dreaming reluctantly; but the young lady's abrupt action would have disturbed even a deeper day-dream. He gazed after her admiringly, but seemed a little surprised.

"Whe-w!" he whistled to himself softly. "What the deuce has possession of her?"

Being innocent of any such intention he did not dream that he had offended her. He felt a loneliness creep over him, such as he had never known before; and he felt a regret he could not account for, as he watched her disappear in the gloom of the night. It was as if something had gone out of his life—something he had known and loved a good while.

He turned his horse's head away from the camp-ground; he could not wait for Ben longer. He must go to the Indian encampment and see what he could do for the lovers.

"It is better so," he murmured to himself, turning and gazing in the direction Hazel had taken, meaning it was best she should return to the caravan she had deserted. He rode away in the direction of the hermit's cave; and behind some boulders, in an out of the way place, at the base of the mountain, he tied his horse. And leaving his rifle, he made a circuitous route to the village of tepees in the rear of which he paused to observe what was going on. He heard the yelling of the savages that were chasing Ben, but did not know the meaning of it. He saw Wenona leave the tent where Bessie was confined, and stealthily visit Robert at his tree.

He could see that the warriors were away, and that now was the time to attempt Robert's rescue. But he must needs wait till the Indian maiden had retired. Perhaps she was bent on releasing the captive. At any rate he was obliged to wait. Then came the meeting between Wenona and Big Wolf, and he was obliged to tolerate further delay.

He was becoming anxious and restive, for he feared the return of the warriors before he could accomplish Robert's rescue. However, if his rescue of the young man had been earlier it might have prevented entirely the escape of the two girls, though Hal could not know it. For Robert's escape was sure to be discovered soon after taking place, and then the safety of Bessie would have been looked after more closely, and her escape made impossible. It was at the moment Big Wolf strode into the center of the village where the old chief sat smoking before his lodge, and began to recount the details of his unsuccessful search for the presumptuous Ben that Hal, the Scout, crawled stealthily up to the tree behind Robert and gave the low hiss that was so well known by all members of the wagon train as one of the scout's signals.

The answer came faintly, but reached the ears listening for it, and proved that the young man knew it was a friend who had approached him. Quickly, Hal cut the bonds that bound his feet to the tree; then, sliding his arm up along the tree-trunk, while keeping hidden behind it, he cut the thongs at the prisoner's elbows, placed a revolver in his hand, and slid back again into the grass.

"If we are discovered, make a dash for liberty and follow me," he had said, while placing the means of defense in Robert's hand. "But skulk away unseen, if possible."

It was at this moment that Bessie and Wenona rose to their feet and disappeared in the mountain forest.

Robert, obeying the directions of the scout, sank to the ground and crept after him, while at the same time the men of the tribe were returning from an opposite direction. He had barely gained the scout's side, in the edge of the wood, when the watchful eye of one of the squaws' turned in the direction of the tree to which Robert was so recently bound.

Instantly a howl went up from the women, which told the fugitives in the wood that the flight had been discovered.

But, as yet, Big Wolf alone was there to give chase.

This story will be continued in next week's Ledger. If you like the Ledger, and we feel sure you do, we would like to have you send in a subscription and take it regularly. A great many thrilling and unusual stories will appear in it during the coming year. You will find it a weekly treat, hence you had better send in your subscription now. Let us hear from you.

What Hope Did.

It stole in on its pinions of snow to the bed of disease, and the sufferer's frown became a smile—the emblem of peace and endurance.

It went to the house of mourning; and from the lips of sorrow there came sweet and cheerful songs.

It laid its head upon the arm of the poor, which was stretched forth at the command of unholy impulses, and saved him from disgrace and ruin.

It dwelt like a living thing in the bosom of the mother whose son tarried long after the promised time of coming, and saved her from desolation, and the "care that killeth."

It hovered over the head of the youth who had become the Ishmael of society, and urged him onward to work which even his enemies praised.

It snatched the maiden from the jaws of death, and went with an old man to heaven.

Seek the inspiration of hope, my good brother. Have it! Reckon it on your own side; wrestle with it that it may not depart. It may repay your pains. Life is hard enough at best, but hope shall lead you over its mountains, and sustain you amid its billows. Part with all beside—but keep thy hope.

A Bear Steals a Little Girl.

We do not have to go to South Africa to learn of real events on which to found interesting animal stories. There is a well-authenticated narrative concerning a grizzly bear in Nyack, Mont., which had been driven by hunger to the home of James Doolittle, carried off his four-year-old girl, and fatally wounded the father, who went in pursuit. The child was playing a short distance from the house when her mother was startled by her cries. She ran in the direction of the cries, and saw a bear carrying the child away. Doolittle also heard the cries, quickly mounted a horse, and, armed with a rifle, started in pursuit with two dogs. The dogs soon drew close to the bear, and the beast dropped the little girl and attacked the dogs. He killed one of them and soon put the other to flight.

Doolittle's horse became unmanageable at sight of the bear, and threw him against a tree, breaking his leg. The bear turned on Doolittle, and clawed and tore him in a frightful manner, inflicting fatal wounds.

The barking of the dogs and screams of the mother attracted a woodcutter, who shot and killed the bear. Aside from a few slight scratches the child was unharmed.

Candor of the Modest Scot.

When Doctor Klopsch, the editor of the Christian Herald, was congratulated upon the honor done him when the Emperor of Japan bestowed upon him the Order of the Rising Sun, he laughed and said: "Yes, my new decoration makes me feel very proud. I feel as proud, in fact, as a Highland chief, and no one could be prouder than that.

"A certain earl," he went on, "once gave a dinner in honor of a great Highland chief, who rarely came down from the hills.

"Though there were many illustrious persons at the dinner, the proud Highlander was curt and haughty with the grandest.

"When the coffee came on the host, leading his Highland guest up and down the great hall, asked him what he thought of the company.

"'Och,' said the chieftain, 'they're no bad. They're no bad chiefs.'

"Then he frowned and proudly swelling out his broad chest, struck it a blow.

"'But the fack is,' he cried, 'I never met a man yet wha was the equal o' mysel'.'"

Retreat? Never!

In an Irish garrison town a theatrical company was giving performances, and some soldiers from the local barracks were engaged to act as supers. Their duties included the waging of a fierce fight in which after a stirring struggle, one army was defeated on a given signal from the prompter. For a few nights all went well, but on the Friday evening a special performance of the piece was to be given under the patronage of the colonel and other officers of the garrison. The two armies met as usual at the end of the second act, when they fought and fought and kept on fighting, regardless of the agonized glare in the eye of their (actor) general, who hoarsely ordered the proper army to "Retreat, confound you!" But the fight still went on, and soon the horrified manager saw the wrong army being driven slowly off the stage, still fighting desperately. Down came the curtain amid roars of laughter, and the fuming manager hastened to ask the delinquents why they had failed to retreat on hearing the signal.

"Retraite," roared a burly fusilier, whose visage had been badly battered, "and is it retraite ye'd have us, wid the colonel and all the officers in the boxes?"

Wise Boy.

Her Father—Did you tell Jack Squeezem of my decision that the parlor gas must be turned out at 10 o'clock?

Irene—Yes, sir.

Her Father—What did he say?

Irene—He said he'd go you two hours better and put it out at 8.

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

TEN LITTLE KITTY CATS.

Ten little kitty cats all dressed up fine,
One tore her pinafore, then there were nine.
Nine little kitty cats eating from one plate,
One got crowded out, then there were eight.
Eight little kitty cats sat up till eleven,
One fell fast asleep, then there were seven.
Seven little kitty cats playing funny tricks,
One rolled out of sight, then there were six.
Six little kittty cats, learning to dive,
One went down too deep, then there were five.
Five little kitty cats playing on the shore,
A big wave caught one, then there were four.
Four little kitty cats climbed up a tree,
One fell down again, then there were three.
Three little kitty cats met a kangaroo,
One went home with him, then there were two.
Two little kitty cats sitting in the sun,
One ran in the house, then there was one.
One little kitty cat went to buy a bun,
He never came back, and so there was none.

Out of the Mouth's of Babes.

Teacher—Johnny, can you tell me what an unknown quantity is?

Johnny (son of a coal dealer)—Yes, ma'am; it's what you get when you buy a ton of coal.

—

Sunday School Teacher—Now, Tommy, what does the story of the prodigal son teach?

Tommy—It teaches us how to get fresh veal.

—

"Now, Willie," said the teacher to a small pupil, "what is the term 'etc.' used for?"

"It is used to make people believe we know more than we do," replied the bright little fellow.

—

"Oh, dear!" sighed small Elmer, "I wish I had another pocket."

"You have several now," rejoined his mother. "Why do you want another?"

"I've looked through all of them for my knife," explained Elmer, "but couldn't find it. If I had another pocket it might be in that."

—

Little Eleanor, aged 7, was spending a few months in the South. One day she came to her mother with an anxious expression. "Mamma, where is yonder anyway? Uncle Charlie said the apples were in yonder, and Aunt Nannie said Mary lived over yonder, and now she says the children are out yonder, and I don't know where yonder is."

—

Small Harold—Papa, won't you please give me 5 cents?

Papa—Not now. Run along. I'm very busy.

Small Harold (holding his hands joined together)—Well, papa, just drop a nickel in the slot and see me go.

—

"Tommy," said a visitor to the 5-year-old pride of the household, "what would you do if you were president of the United States?"

"I wouldn't let anybody wash my neck or comb my hair," was the prompt reply.

—

"How stupid you are, Lola!" exclaimed her mother. "I don't believe you know the difference between a fried oyster and a whale."

"Yes, I do, mamma," replied the little miss. "One is cooked and the other isn't."

—

"Johnny," said a mother to an incorrigible youngster, "don't you know that your face is awfully dirty?"

"Well, what if it is?" he rejoined. "The face of the earth is dirty, but nobody makes a fuss about it."

—

Little Fred—Are you a lawyer like papa?

Dr. Smith—Oh, no; I'm a physician.

Little Fred—Then you are the man who goes to see sick people before they die.

—

A little 2-year-old girl was at church for the first time and after seeing the minister take his hymnal and Bible out of the pulpit said: "Mamma, what else do you suppose the man has in the refrigerator?"

Hiss and Clap.

This is an excellent party game. One of the company goes outside the room, whilst the remainder of the players decide among themselves which he shall kneel to. When this is settled upon, the person who is outside is allowed to enter and he kneels in front of one whom he thinks is the right one. If he should make a correct guess, the company clap their hands, and the person to whom he knelt goes outside. If, however, the guess is an incorrect one, the company hiss loudly, and the guesser has to go outside, come back and try again. Of course it will make more amusement if when a boy is sent outside the room a girl is chosen as the person to whom he has to kneel, and the opposite if a girl be outside the room.

A Few Odd Facts.

Bristol, during the reign of Edward III. of England, had three merchants named Blanket living in the town. They were woolen weavers, and the first people to make the material which ever since has been called by their name. It was first used for making peasants' clothing.

In the German Royal Family a custom is in vogue of lighting a candle for every year upon the birthday of any one connected with the family. These candles, standing in golden candlesticks, surround the birthday cake, and make a pretty sight.

In Naples there exists a race of cats which live in churches, where they are kept by the authorities to eat the mice which are numerous in the old buildings, and they may frequently be seen walking up and down amongst the congregation, or gravely sitting before the pulpit.

Far-Sighted Margaret.

Little Margaret is a far-sighted child, and she always provides for the future in her thoughts. Recently her father went to Boston on business. At the evening prayer time her mother suggested that Margaret should add, "keep papa safe in Boston."

To this Margaret exclaimed: "Goodness, I didn't know God was in Boston!" Still pondering, she continued, "But I'll ask him, for papa is very important, isn't he, mamma?"

"Oh, very, dear. If we did not have our papa we would not have this pretty house and all our nice things."

"Does papa give us all these?" queried the maid, "and without him we would have to give them up?"

"Yes, Margaret."

"Goodness! I think it is an awful risk to have only one papa in a family! I think there should be several in case of accidents."

Why He Was Sober.

In a kindergarten school not far away the teacher of a small class trains the youngsters in self-control by diverting methods. One method is to stand the children in a row and then endeavor to make them laugh. The one who can longest restrain himself gets a good mark.

One day little Patsy O'Connor, the youngest and usually the merriest member, astonished every one by keeping throughout the test, a face really awful in its sternness. At last the teacher said:

"Well, Patsy, you have improved. You, the youngest, have not laughed once."

Whereupon Patsy groaned:

"I guess, ma'am, if you all had the pain in the pit of yer stomach that I have yer wouldn't feel much like larfin', either."

Catching the Teacher.

A young teacher who had a good opinion of his ability to catch the pupils tripping was conducting an oral examination. Calling on the "smart boy" of the class, he asked:

"How many sides has a square?"

"Four."

"And a hexagon?"

"Six."

"And an octagon?"

"Eight."

"And a circle?"

"Two, sir."

"What?" exclaimed the examiner, delighted at the boy's apparent error.

"Yes, sir, two—inside and outside."

Hunt the Whistle.

The chief participator in this game must be ignorant of the trick about to be played. He is blindfolded and told to kneel down whilst a lady knights him, naming him "Knight of the Whistle." During the process some one fastens a small whistle to his coat-tail by means of a piece of ribbon. He is then bidden to rise and search for the whistle. The hunt begins; all the players combine to deceive the searcher; they must blow the whistle whenever they can do so without being detected. When the searcher discovers the trick the game is, of course, at an end.

A New Disease.

Little Alice was in the parlor entertaining a caller, until mamma should be ready to come down. Alice was 3 years old. The caller was an old friend and she now appeared in glasses for the first time. Alice surveyed her critically, but kindly.

"You look awful homely with glasses on," she remarked with winsome frankness, "but you has to wear them, doesn't you? You are so up-sighted!"

"This" and "That."

A confederate is necessary for this trick. The one performing the trick goes out of the room and the confederate agrees with the audience to touch a certain article. The person outside is recalled and his confederate begins to question him.

"Did I touch this music book?" "No." "Did I touch this table?" "No." "Did I touch this knife?" "No." "Did I touch that fork?" "Yes" The secret consists in saying the word "that" before the article touched, instead of "this."

PECULIAR.

"Good-by Lord. I'm going away for a
Nora spread the clothes about
On the grass, and said to me
"That will make them white you see."
So I thought I'd like to look
Just like Snowwhite in the book,
And I tried to run and play
In the sunshine all the day,
For I thought that by the night
I would be a lily white,
But—oh, dear!—instead I found
I was worse than ever browned!

A Tricky Boy.

The son of an Italian fruit dealer in New Orleans thought that the stock of oranges did not go off fast enough, and so he cut one open and pushed a silver half dollar inside and sold it to a woman. She soon came back for a dozen more, and as the story of her find became known oranges were sold by the hundred. The boy was patting himself on the back over his sharpness when he was arrested and fined $10 for false pretences.

Scaring a Dog.

A boy at Kalamazoo, Mich., made a bet of a nickel with another boy that he could scare a grocer's bull dog. He got down on his hands and knees and began to snarl and growl, but instead of slinking away the dog took him by the nose and bit away such a large portion of it that a surgeon has had to make a new one of wax. That boy will have to look out when he has a cold in his head.

THE BABBLING BROOK

Afar upon the mountain side
I paused to watch a streamlet glide.
"Pray, little stream," to it I say,
"Why do you murmur thus alway?"
"Well, I can't rest," the brooklet said,
"Because there's boulders in my bed;
And when the sun is hot and high
My mouth gets very parched and dry;
And now the huntsman's gun and lead
Have shot the hares off of my head;
But I'll be dammed if people see
The power that there is in me,
And when to steel and wheel I'm fast
Then I will get my turn at last.
That's what they say about the worm,
So this is why I always murm."

A Spider That Fishes.

A spider which fishes has recently been discovered in Buenos Ayres, the capital of the Argentine Republic. Naturalists have observed its curious means of livelihood. In shallow places it spins under water, between two stones, a double conical web, like a net, on which it runs just as a land spider runs on its gossamers. Small fish, tadpoles and other small aquatic creatures are victims of its meshes, and judging from the numerous shriveled skins that cling to the net, the catch of this submarine fisherman is plenteous.

Floral Decorations.

Jennie is only five, and her brother Bob is six; so of course she asks all sorts of questions, and he always answers them.

The other day she heard some one talking about "Floral Decorations" and immediately asked Bob what it meant.

"Why, don't you know even that!" exclaimed Bob scornfully. "Why, floral decorations are rugs or carpet or matting, or anything else you use to decorate the floor!"

—

What did a blind man take at dinner to restore his sight?—He took a cup and saucer (saw, sir).

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